

**THE HERMENEUTIC OF THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS  
AS MANIFEST IN THE INTRODUCTORY  
FORMULAE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
MODERN HERMENEUTICS**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of part of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Faculty of Humanities  
University of Pretoria  
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November 2005

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## INTRODUCTION

There is no better place to observe how the author understands Scripture than by observing the author's personal use of Scripture. Burns (1996:589) suggests "that the best way to approach this topic is to observe the use of the OT in Hebrews, since that is where the author's hermeneutical practice is most evident." But specifically where is this evident? It would seem that there are three places (and if one holds to an author-altered-quotation-theory this would be four) where his hermeneutical principles come to the fore.

Firstly, a New Testament author's choice of Old Testament citation conveys his hermeneutic in practice. That is to say, that the passage that he quotes, is chosen by the author for a particular purpose and according to a particular set of guiding principles. Naturally, the author's choice of citation is influenced by the point he wants to make. He is communicating with his audience and therefore wants to underpin his arguments with Old Testament texts and therefore with the authority of Scripture. He wants his audience to see for themselves that he is not speaking on his own but that he is stating that which Scripture itself says and that their response will be one of obedience to God rather than acquiescence to that which he alone has called for. But why does he choose one passage over another? This is answered by understanding his reason for the selection he has made based on a set of unknown but evidenced criteria; his hermeneutic in practice. This is discussed briefly in chapter 2.

Secondly, his hermeneutical principles are evident not only in his selection of passage, but also in his explanation of the Old Testament citation. The position that the author of Hebrews has followed typical contemporary Midrashic practice when compared to other Jewish writings of the time has been strongly mooted (Stendahl 1954; Ellis 1957; Ellis 1985:201-206; Ellis 1988:702-709; Gundry 1967). He, naturally, is a man of his day using the methods typical of the time. He writes in order to be understood and therefore writes in a fashion that is understandable according to the practice of his day. It seems that the majority of the contributions regarding the hermeneutics of the author of Hebrews have focussed on this second aspect and observed how the author has interpreted the texts (e.g. the difficult "misquote" of Ps

40 in chapter 10), characters (e.g. Moses and Melchizedek and the role of the faith characters in chapter 11) and historical events (Moses on Mount Sinai in chapter 12 and the desert wanderers of chapter 3 and 4) and forms (e.g. the tabernacle in chapter 8 and 9) found in the Old Testament.

But both of these aspects focus on how the author's hermeneutic is practically applied; it does not examine the hermeneutic itself. The previous two instances observe the application of the author's methods of interpretation, his praxis in order to derive his hermeneutical principles. The principles espoused in this paper may well be derived from the practice of the author of Hebrew's methods but it is a secondary step and therefore open to further interpretation (and possible error) on the part of the one doing the work. It is my understanding that it is exactly this aspect of secondary interpretation with each scholar having different perspectives and presuppositions that has led to the plethora of interpretations and perspectives that are proposed. These are included and evaluated in chapter one.

I would suggest that there is no better place to observe the author's hermeneutics than in the statements that the author makes explicitly rather than his observing his practice according to implicit principles. There is no better place to see these than in the Introductory Formulae (IF's). An IF is quite simply the New Testament writer's own comments which precede a selected Old Testament quotation. Typically an IF is a phrase which introduces an Old Testament quotation. In the New Testament examples of these abound including "that it may be fulfilled...," "it is written...," "have you not read..." etc. A fuller definition is given later in chapter 2.

Strangely, the close scrutiny of the IF's in the New Testament has been largely neglected generally (Burns 1996:597). While there are many authors who include some comments regarding the IF's, these are usually contained to a single chapter or more often, to a subheading. Why have the IF's been overlooked historically as the primary source of an author's principles of Old Testament interpretation? The reason for this can surely only be one of the following; either that the methods of the New Testament author's hermeneutic are not evident in the IF's (and therefore the founding basis of this work is flawed at inception), or the author's hermeneutical principles are so evident elsewhere that the study is not needed and would provide

redundant results or perhaps even contrasting results, or concern to derive the principles of the author of any biblical writing by this method are not helpful or simply not required, or lastly, the value of the IF's in this regard have simply been overlooked. It seems to me that the latter is the most fitting explanation, possibly having been overshadowed by the quotations themselves.

No other book in the New Testament contains so many Old Testament quotations and relies so heavily on the Old Testament for the support for its argument as does the book of Hebrews. The Old Testament is the only source which the author quotes and he does so 35 times (although there is much debate as to the exact number). The writer includes many allusions to passages without quoting them, indistinct echoes which resonate with a particular Old Testament event or concept, the longest quotation in the New Testament (Jr 31:31-34) and the longest catena (1:5-13). Thus we have an excellent practical example of how a New Testament writer interpreted the Old Testament and used it in order to build his argument.

The author's use of the Old Testament is pivotal in his development of his argument. There is substantial agreement to support the view that the author of the book of Hebrews structured his material around some key Old Testament passages that direct the development of his work (Caird 1959, Longenecker 1975, France 1996, Guthrie 2003). Guthrie states that "to attempt to study any portion of Hebrews, or the general development of the books thought, without thorough consideration of the author's ways in which he utilises his Old Testament texts and the ends to which those ways lead, is likely to be misguided, or at least an incomplete exercise" (2003:272). In a similar vein, Lane observes that as early as the eighteenth century J. A. Bengel (1742) highlighted the role of a quotation from the Old Testament as a "point of departure for the ensuing discussion" and that "the quotations from the OT are functionally pivotal in the thematic development of the discourse" (Lane 1991:cxiii).

Consulting a typical Hebrews commentary, it is found that the same preliminary questions are asked in a manner like that of any other New Testament epistle. For example the following questions are asked (and typically several answers are postulated), "Who wrote this letter?" "Who were the recipients?" "What was the



particular issue that faced the readers which prompted the writing of the letter?" In the author's opening statements, however, we do not find an author's name, a recipient's name and a greeting, as in a typical New Testament letter. Rather, we discover a unique introductory statement in the opening verses (1:1-4) pertaining to the method in which God has spoken and speaks. It has been established that the introductory sentence is the key to the author's use of Scripture (Lane 1991:cxxvii; Hughes 1979:103-104). This opening statement, so different to a typical New Testament letter, necessitates a different method of introductory analysis, one conducted on its own terms, not based on the common methods used for a New Testament letter (Lindars 1991:135).

Consider the question which the author's introductory thesis begs: If, in the past, God spoke to the Old Testament forefathers through the prophets and contrastingly "in these last days has spoken to us by Son," then why does the writer include the words of the Old Testament prophets (and as frequently as he does) as being the words still spoken as authoritative in his own day when indeed it is proposed that there is a new dispensation in which the Son speaks and not the prophets?

Thus an understanding of this book is integrally linked to the author's view of Scripture. How did the author understand the word of the prophets in relation to those of God Himself? What was his approach to Scripture and method in quoting the Scriptures that he does? As Ellingworth puts it, "the deepest question regarding use of the OT in Hebrews is the relation between the authority of Christ and the authority of scripture" (1993:41). Ellis phrases it similarly; "the formulas, then, reveal not only a method of citation but also something of the theological convictions of the New Testament writers" (1991:82).

While it is a helpful exercise to investigate the passages quoted in a book and the manner in which they are used in order to understand the hermeneutic of an author, that which the author states directly is surely of greater value rather than that which is alluded to indirectly and inferred. Indeed, much can be deduced regarding the author's choice of quotation, the differences between the Old Testament passage as we have it today and his quotation of it, the author's interpretation of it, and application of it to a particular false doctrine that threatened the early church or in

support of an historical actuality. Yet all of this is subject to the interpretive skill and subjectivity of the reader. At best, what is presented is a theory which, regardless of its support, remains as such until disproved.

#### Abbreviations and Terms Used

The abbreviations used are those recommended by the New Testament Society of South Africa as follows; Gn, Ex, Lv, Nm, Dt, Jos, Jdg, Rt, 1 Sm, 2 Sm, 1 Ki, 2 Ki, 1 Chr, 2 Chr, Ezr, Neh, Es, Job, Ps, Pr, Ec, Can, Is, Jr, Lm, Ezk, Dn, Hs, Jl, Am, Ob, Jnh, Mi, Nah, Hab, Zph, Hg, Zch, Ml, Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn, Ac, Rm, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gl, Eph, Phlp, Col, 1 Th, 2 Th, 1 Tm, 2 Tm, Tt, Phlm, Heb, Ja, 1 Pt, 2 Pt, 1 Jn, 2 Jn, 3 Jn, Jude, Rv.

When I refer to the author, I am never referring to myself as the author of this document, but am referring to the author of Hebrews in every respect. Regarding the meaning of the term ‘hermeneutics’ I am referring to the theory of interpretation. Kaiser (1981:47) defines hermeneutics as “the theory that guides exegesis; exegesis may be understood... to be the practice of and the set of procedures for discovering the author’s intended meaning.” Corley (2002:2-19) distinguishes between hermeneutics and exegesis. If hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation which as a science enunciates principles, then exegesis is the practice of interpretation whereby the defined hermeneutical principles are put into practice.

When citing the Greek text, I have made use of *The Greek New Testament (United Bible Societies, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition)* exclusively.

## CHAPTER I - A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 1.1. OVERVIEW

The last two decades have witnessed a keen awakening of interest in the subject of 'Biblical intertextuality,' and particularly in the way the writers of the NT use the OT (see especially Moyise 2001; Hays & Green 1995). This has led naturally, because of Hebrews prolific and varied use of the OT texts and concepts, to a resurgence of interest in the book of Hebrews. Guthrie (2003) evaluates the literary contributions pertaining to the hermeneutic of Hebrews and broadly identifies seven approaches. In this chapter, these seven methods will be used to analyse and categorise the various literary contributions and include Hebrews' hermeneutic as proof-texting, *sensus plenior*, dialogical hermeneutics, Christ's pre-existence as the hermeneutical key, a hermeneutic of permission, hermeneutic of a living voice and, lastly, a typological hermeneutic.

In spite of this contemporary awakening of interest, there has been very little written that focuses on the role of the introductory formulae and even less which utilises these to attempt to reconstruct the author's hermeneutic. Yet, in the introductory formulae the author reveals his understanding of the authority of the OT as God's words spoken in the past and yet still having a role in the author's present. Regarding the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews, Guthrie states that "there is no topic more important to Hebrews' interpretation than the book's use of the OT" (Guthrie 2004:430). He states that "research into Hebrews' appropriation of the OT text is vital for ongoing interpretation of the book and certain strides have been made in recent years. In light of the topic's importance, it is surprising, however, to find that recent overviews of the topic are scarce" (Guthrie 2004:430). Clearly, on this particular aspect, there is much work to be done.

This chapter (after some introductory comments under 1.2 and 1.3) has been divided into two basic parts; firstly an analysis of those who have written regarding the hermeneutics evident in the book of Hebrews, and secondly, an overview of the material that has been written regarding the role of the IF's in Hebrews. However,

there are really three categories of literature that have been consulted in preparing this paper. The first is naturally that which has been written on the book of Hebrews itself and these typically take the form of a commentary. Here, indeed, is found a vast array and the list of excellent works is extensive covering a number of centuries and varying greatly in size and value.

The second category is that which pertains to the science and art of interpretation and here I am speaking about the many works that have been produced on the subject of biblical hermeneutics, all of which, naturally, come into play with respect to the book of Hebrews.

These two former categories, Hebrews and hermeneutics, have been combined below into a single sub point, 'Literature Related to the Hermeneutics of the Author of Hebrews' under 1.4. The focus in this section has been to look at the union of these two aspects rather than the totality of both categories.

The third and final category, the subject of IF's and particularly literature related to the IF's found in the book of Hebrews, is of necessity very brief as there is very little written on the subject.

## 1.2. THE LACK OF CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE BOOK

It is no simple task to seek to paint the picture of the author's hermeneutic in light of the far removed historical situation and life setting that gave rise to the author putting 'pen to paper'. This task is greatly hindered by the great number of details that are lacking when compared to the epistles of the New Testament. Unlike the format of the New Testament letters, there is no author, no recipient and no greeting. Like the letters, it contains closing instructions but with only two greetings (13:24), one of which includes a reference to "those in Italy" (13:24). The writer makes mention of "our brother Timothy" (13:23) who had been recently released but does not give any further detail of their relationship. That the writer is male is evident in the masculine form ending of the verb in 11:32. He includes himself among those

who received the message from others (2:3; 4:2) which would seem to indicate that the writer was not Paul who claimed that he received the message directly “through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gl 1:12 cf. 1 Cor 11:23). Apart from a few scanty details there is nothing to identify, with any great degree of confidence, the identity of the author which has led to the ‘great debate of Hebrews;’ the identity of the human author such that we can concur with Origen (185-254), “but as to who it was that really wrote the epistle, God only knows.”

The details surrounding the book i.e. the identity of the author, the identity of his recipients, and the context into which he writes etc. are thought to be so critical that Burns (1996:587) writes that “we do not have enough information that we would seem to need for an accurate interpretation.” Hebrews is also described as “something of a joke—a joke played upon a church obsessed with finding complete certainty about its origins” (Hurst 1990:13). Indeed, the primary means by which a New Testament epistle (and, even to some degree, a New Testament writing) is understood seems to be derived from the information included in commentaries and the like; author, recipients, purpose of writing, date of writing, the author’s place of writing etc. Within this conceptual frame of reference, the contextual information provides the primary key to the interpretation of the book rather than that which is contained in the book. That is not to say however, that much of the surrounding detail is not included in the book, but this detail is typically understood as providing the essential building blocks to providing the framework by which any New Testament book is interpreted. Within the book of Hebrews, that contextual information is conspicuously absent forcing the focus of the interpretation of the book to rest primarily on the text of the book itself without the often cumbersome comments and narrow perspectives of critical scholars which commonly disagree with each other anyway.

In Hebrews we have the only New Testament writing which will not fit into the mould of a ‘typical New Testament letter’ defying interpretive analysis by these popular methods. In this respect Hebrews stands alone. But it stands alone in another respect too. With its polished Greek and form, is it decidedly ‘un-Pauline’ and many have proposed a number of authors who may have written this ‘unletter-like’ communication. Some of the proposed writers include Barnabas, Luke, Clement

of Rome (names proposed by the early church) and more recently Apollos, Aquila, Ariston, Philip, Jude and Silvanus (Burns 1996:588). But we have no extant comparison for most of these authors. The Pauline advocates have many letters but nothing like this and yet nonetheless, and perhaps, for too long, the debate has sided with Paul as the eminent scholar and author. But who else have we except Paul? What vast library of early church writings do we have from these learned individuals that we may examine and compare and contrast? Yet it seems that the opinion has been that because Paul writes and because we still have proof of that, he must be the author! As it lacks the tell-tale signs of a New Testament letter, there is no definite genre into which this book can be placed. In the writer's words, the book is a brief "word of exhortation" (13:22), unique in its class, with no comparative genre in the New Testament, possibly the only writing of an unknown author, leaving it decidedly in a class of its own (Evans 2004:144).

The book, moreover, contains no clearly stated purpose, such that the purpose must be constructed from a "mirror reading" of the text in order to recreate the crisis which the author addresses. Neither is this an easy task, for Hebrews background and progression of thought is far from simplistic due to the foreign nature of the book as understood by a modern reader; "There is no denying that the general drift of the argument within the letter strikes the reader as difficult. This is mainly because the train of thought is clothed in language and allusions drawn from the cultic background of the Old Testament" (Guthrie 1983:15).

All of this makes the task of the student and exegete considerably more difficult than other biblical books and contribute only a few meagre facts toward defining the *Sitz im Leben*, such that Lane can refer to Hebrews as "a sermon in search of a setting" (1991:15). The question as to whether the book was written before or after the destruction of the temple has divided the interpreters into two camps, both finding considerable basis for their argument but leading to a very different interpretation of various passages and to some degree, the book as a whole.

### 1.3. THE PROBLEM OF THE COMPLEX NATURE OF THE BOOK

The second problem that faces us when approaching this subject is that it is difficult to follow the argument of the author; “Every reader can see that the author is building up a sustained argument but it is hard to grasp it as a whole” (Lindars 1991:128). Moreover, it is no small task to make a meaningful contribution to the vast amount of scholarly study that has already been produced on the book of Hebrews. Much has been written on the subject of hermeneutics over the last 500 years, one of the earliest definitive works being that of William Ames (1576-1633) who’s book, *The Marrow of Theology*, proved to become the standard at Harvard for decades after its establishment in the seventeenth century (Kaiser 1981:24). Moreover, Osborne (1997:479) observes that “Hebrews may well be the most complex New Testament book in its use of the Old Testament...There has been widespread disagreement over the hermeneutical technique to be used.” Not only is the hermeneutics of Hebrews debated but other aspects too. Steyn (2000:263) observes “Hebrews could be classified as a book of controversies in scholarship. Almost every aspect that one encounters here relates to a history of controversial debates. Whether it is authorship, or the canonicity, the place of origin, or the genre, the Vorlage represented in the explicit quotations or the interpretation of these Scriptures in the context of the author—there always seems to be at least two opposing theories present.” Thus, there is not a great deal of harmony among commentators and theologians but rather many schools of thought made by authors who, in turn, add to one author’s contribution and critique another, producing a vast number of varied positions stacked loosely one upon another.

The assessment of the literature pertaining to the hermeneutics of the author of Hebrews will be discussed first. Secondly, I will look at the scholarly contribution regarding the introductory formulae (also called formulas of quotation) used in the book of Hebrews. While there has been some work done on this subject, covering the whole of the New Testament generally, by comparison, it is ground that has been largely unexplored. This is even more the case when one looks just at the introductory formulae pertaining to the book of Hebrews to which only a handful of authors have made some contribution. I suspect this is the case because one always looks for keys in the places you were most likely to leave them, but often they are not

found there at all. So it is that the contribution that the introductory formulae makes when compared to that of the rest of the New Testament yields something special and unique and which greatly augments our understanding of the author's view of Scripture, of God and His authority. This will be explored in subsequent chapters.

#### 1.4. LITERATURE RELATED TO THE HERMENEUTICS OF THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS

Before looking at the differences among commentators and theologians regarding a hermeneutic of the author of Hebrews, it must be stated that there is a reasonable amount of largely common ground. Guthrie (2003:284-290) has proposed seven schools of thought regarding the hermeneutic of the author of Hebrews which I will draw upon in order to categorize various contributions in this field. The categories are not mutually exclusive, such that a writer may fall into more than one category.

##### 1.4.1. *Hebrews' Hermeneutic as Proof-texting*

The basic thought here is that the texts of the Old Testament are subservient to the purpose (and hermeneutic) of Hebrews such that the texts quoted by the author are modified without regard for original context in order to serve the author's greater purpose. In this way, the texts are forced to say what the author wants them to say and serve as proof texts for the author's own objective and supporting his own argument. The quoted texts of the Old Testament are nothing more than proof texts at the mercy of the author's own presuppositions. This is clearly stated evident in Ellis' comment, "...citations diverge from the LXX because of deliberate alteration, i.e. by *ad hoc* translation and elaboration or by the use of a variant textual tradition, to serve the purpose of the New Testament writer" (1985:199). Fairbairn (1975:395) concludes his findings in volume one by remarking, "...it perfectly consists with a profound regard to Scripture as given by inspiration of God, to employ a measure of freedom in quoting it, if no violence is done to its general import."



Motyer (1999:7-8) finds that Weiss (1991:181) holds to this view of Hebrews. It is clear that Attridge also holds to this view as is evidenced in the following comment; “it is also clear that our author felt free to alter the words of Scripture, and some of the differences between Hebrews’ citations and witnesses to the LXX may be due to tendentious handling of the text” (1989:23). While it is true that there are apparent differences between the citation in Hebrews and the Old Testament text (for instance the example cited by Attridge, Heb 8:8-12 citing Jr 31:31-34), little room is given to explain these differences except that the writer deliberately felt the freedom to do so. Moyise also holds to this view whereby the text of the Old Testament is subservient to the argument of the author and modified accordingly. He states that “the task of the interpreter then was not to discern what the text meant in the past but what it means today” (2001:4) and therefore, when Matthew quotes Micah 5:2 in Mt 2:6, “Matthew has inserted the Greek word *oudamos* (‘by no means’) into the quotation in order to make his point...first century interpretation was quite happy to make this point by telescoping all this [the explanation for the insertion] into a single *modified* quotation” (2001:4). Moyise accounts for the differences between the Old Testament text and the New Testament writer’s quotation of it (2001:4-5), but establishes his view of the New Testament writers hermeneutic with this revealing statement; “The point is that we are always dealing with an *interpreted text*” (2001:5).

This particular issue is at the heart of heated debate among evangelicals for it touches on the all-important subject of the inerrancy and therefore the authority of Scripture. Bock (2004:1) comments;

For evangelicals, whose distinctive characteristic is their commitment to a high view of Scripture, perhaps no hermeneutical area engenders more discussion than the relationship between the Testaments. Within this discussion, a particularly important issue is the use made of the Old Testament by the New Testament. For evangelicals this issue is of high importance since both Christological claims and theories of biblical inspiration are tied to the conclusions made about how the phenomena of these passages are related to one another. The hermeneutics of the New Testament’s use of the Old is a live topic for discussion as one of the major issues of debate in current evangelicalism. In short, the subject of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is a “hot” issue in evangelical circles, as many recent works suggest.

Guthrie notes that Motyer (1999:7-8) finds two problems with this approach; firstly, it “greatly underestimates Hebrew’s clear sense of Heilsgeschichte” (Guthrie 2003:284) or salvation history and secondly it reduces the author’s obvious effort and hard work in doing justice to the Old Testament to that which would have been understood by his readers as shoddy exegesis and therefore not worth taking seriously.

Instead, Guthrie states that “Hebrews appeals to principles embraced in historical-grammatical exegesis, such as sensitivity to context, specific word meanings and inherent logic in a passage” (2003:284). This “proof-text” method of understanding the hermeneutic of the author of Hebrews is altogether too simplistic and would surely have been recognised and exposed in its day for what it was—the author’s own twisting of Scripture to suit his own purposes and would not have been taken seriously by his readers. The Jews had a profound respect for the Old Testament text as the infallible Word of God (Berkhof 1950:14). His audience would have laughed him off and openly discredited the author if it were found that he had misquoted or misinterpreted or deliberately attempted to mislead his readers.

Other options to a modified text theory exist but are generally not seriously considered. For instance, Thomas (1964:303) notes that some commentators have suggested that the citations were derived from a lost source of the Greek Old Testament or perhaps from liturgical sources. Thomas concludes by saying that the author of Hebrews used a primitive comparatively pure Septuagint text before it went through an editing process resulting in the LXX<sup>A</sup> and LXX<sup>B</sup> in their present forms (1964:325). Other alternative suggestions have been presented such as recitation from memory, technical difficulties in translating from the Hebrew or Aramaic to Greek and the availability of particular recensions at the disposal of the author (Kaiser 1985:6). These suggestions are all dated hypotheses indicating that these proposals have fallen out of favour and that the majority of scholarship today has accepted that the author simply made use of the popular ‘peshet’ method of his day. Peshet (interpretation) was the practice of adapting Old Testament texts, regardless of their historical setting, into a contemporary situation, suiting the texts to meet the needs of the community.

To this point, Kaiser, states that this is improbable, as if the writers were seeking to win their audience over they would have resorted to using the simple literal method of interpretation (*peshat*) and not *peshet*. An ad hoc interpretation of texts adapted to suit the needs of an already “somewhat hostile audience...would have been readily recognized for what it really was” (Kaiser 1981:56). With this I would agree for in order to persuade his readers convincingly, his citation of Scripture and its interpretation would have to have withstood critical scrutiny in order to win his readers over.

#### 1.4.2. *Sensus Plenior*

*Sensus plenior* or “fuller sense” is that ‘deeper meaning’ of a text which God had in mind when the hagiographer was inspired to write and which may have been hidden from the consciousness of the writer at the time of writing but was subsequently brought to light at a later time and specifically to the apostles and New Testament writers. The Holy Spirit is therefore understood as the prime expositor of the text such that the understanding of the Old Testament is primarily a spiritual exercise, to which logic and rules of interpretation are subservient.

While there is a degree of truth in that there is a sense whereby the secret mystery of the kingdom was kept secret or hidden and revealed only later by Christ to his disciples firstly through the meaning of the parables (Mt 13:11-35), then with respect to the Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament (Lk 24:44-47) and then to Paul (1 Cor 15:3-4; Rm 16:25-26; Col 1:24-27), the *sensus plenior* view, if taken to its logical conclusion is too abstract and subjective. Essentially it is an adequate justification for the reinstatement of the allegorical interpretation of the dark ages, whereby the hidden meaning is made evident but is subject only to the fanciful imagination of the exegete. Thus the “products of so-called ‘pneumatical exegesis’ are too weird and wild to be considered a fair description of the interpretive method used in Hebrews” (Barth 1962:77). If indeed, new insights regarding faith and theological harmony between the Old Testament and New are revealed by this method, why did this “fuller sense” escape the hagiographers themselves? Were they not inspired such that what was written was produced under the promptings of

the Holy Spirit? “*Sensus plenior* is possible only if the apostles and prophets wrote better than they knew” (Kaiser 1981:110 cf. Coppens 1968:135-138) and that a reader is able to discern through their writings that greater thing. Moo (1986:210-211), sees the greater thing as anything within the context of the whole canon of Scripture which provides the framework for legitimate interpretation of a ‘fuller sense’ meaning. The human author, he states, may have been fully unaware of this meaning, but which the divine author of the whole canon was not (Moo 1986:204). Indeed, “the use of the Old Testament in the New cannot be understood without setting it in the framework of the canon as witness to salvation history” (Moo 1986:209). Yet, it seems to me that on the one hand meaning is interpreted within the boundaries of the canon of Scripture but on the other, any interpretation regardless of how creative, provided it falls within the parameters of recorded Scripture, is possible and even legitimate.

Meaning is thus entirely in the hands and subject to the whim of the reader. What is the meaning of any passage? Is the meaning in the mind and text of the original author or is it in the creative whim of any exegete who may choose to give it any meaning he may choose regardless of how fanciful the interpretation may be and regardless of who the exegete may be? If the latter is true, then any passage has a multitude of possible meanings, quite possibly in opposition to one another and so, at the end of the day, no real meaning at all. Words without meaning are nonsense. Fairbairn, addressing the extremities of allegorical interpretation notes that, “by pushing the matter beyond its just limits, we reduce the sacred to a level with the profane, and at the same time, throw an air of uncertainty over the whole aspect of its typical character” (1975:104). He goes on to observe that there are no fixed rules or principles used to guide an interpretation leaving “room on every hand for arbitrariness and caprice to enter” (1975:104).

Martin (1977:224), however, gives two guidelines which are helpful in keeping the interpretation within legitimate parameters. Firstly, the New Testament should authorise the “fuller sense” meaning of an Old Testament passage and secondly, the New Testament’s larger fulfilment should be in agreement with the literal sense.

### 1.4.3. *Dialogical Hermeneutics*

This view attempts to listen to the dialogue within God and between God and man and elevates the contribution of man's words and appreciates the variety of the many ways in which God speaks. Barth initially proposed this method of interpretation; "Exegesis is for this author [of Hebrews] participation in the dialogue of the Bible. It means to turn one's head and ear and finger now here, now there, and to enjoy the great variety of the 'many ways' in which the Word is being said" (1962:64-65). For him, the hermeneutical key is the "hearing participation in the dialogue that goes on within God and between God and man" (1962:64) and "active participation and a bold move forward in and with the dialogues and tensions of type and antitype" (1962:69).

For Barth, this explains the author's choice of persons, events and range of texts from the Torah, prophets and Psalms rather than one Old Testament statement only and the number of ways in which the Old Testament is interpreted in Hebrews. Clearly, hearing is not enough, but involves 'participation.' If by participation, Barth means obedience, to what is heard in terms of the necessity of holding fast their confidence in faith ensuring that a hardened, evil unbelieving heart is not found in his readers, then I would concur. But for Barth, the exegetical principle that is drawn out is not this at all. Rather it is a process of interpretation whereby the author of Hebrews' function is understood as being an interpreter for God; hearing God's voice and interpreting these words to his readers which would not otherwise be heard and understood. Thus the Old Testament texts are treated as a *maschal* or *raz-pesher*, a mystery requiring interpretation and explanation (Bruce 1964:l) similar to the writings found at Qumran.

In this way, the author 'engages in dialog' not with God nor with man, but rather in a semi-prophetic manner, taking God's words and making their meaning known to his readers (Guthrie 2003:285), even standing as an intermediary between the God and the people of God in a Moses-on-Mount-Sinai type manner.

But while it is this, it is more than this as indicated by the statement, “God’s word cannot be heard unless also man’s word spoken to God, in the name of God, for or against God, is heard” (Barth 1962:64). If by this, Barth means that the historical account of God’s dealings with the Israelites in the Old Testament contains the record of the words of men as prayers spoken to God or spoken to others on God’s behalf, or even against God, then this is certainly the case, but his meaning is unclear. This does, however, seem to be the case for the exegesis of the author of Hebrews is described as “critical research done in the history and literature of Israel, with the purpose of learning and teaching more and better about the ‘helper’ of man ‘anointed’ by God” (1962:70).

We notice two things in response to this. Firstly, the Old Testament contains more than a genre of dialogue, but historical account and other genre types which could not be described as dialogue but, at best, as monologue.

Secondly, there is some confusion as to where the dialogue begins and ends. Is it the Old Testament alone that is understood as dialogue or is it understood that the writer of Hebrews sees himself as involved in the dialogue either between God and himself in terms of personal learning and with respect to teaching, between God or himself and the church as he writes pastorally for the encouragement of the church? While this method seems to offer much with regards to understanding the Old Testament as a divine oracle and the direct utterance of God (Bruce 1964:xlix) and thereby to the necessity of hearing, which is the writer of Hebrews’ concern, there is not a little confusion in the terms used and parties in mind and in the end, the method is empty and unsatisfactory.

#### 1.4.4. *Christ's Pre-existence as the Hermeneutical Key*

From the first lines of the text, it is clear that Christ is the focus of this “word of encouragement.” Ellingworth (1993:41-42) concludes his findings on the author’s use of the Old Testament with these observations;

The author’s approach to the OT may be summarized as follows: Christ by whom God has now spoken his final word (1:1f), was alive and active in creation (1:2) and throughout Israel’s history. Any part of the OT may thus in principle be understood as speaking about Christ, or as spoken to or by him...Indeed, since Christ was already at work in OT times, even an OT text without a future reference (such as Ps. 40:6-8 = Heb 10:5-7) may be applied to Christ.

Ellingworth affirms and builds upon Lindars (1991:29, 129) who also affirms that God’s divine plan of salvation is a self-revelation on the part of God which reaches its climax in Christ.

Juel (1988:1) and Ellingworth (1993:42) state that Christ presented himself as the interpretive key to the Old Testament texts (1 Cor 15:3-7) thus providing the focus and direction for later messianic interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures by the apostles. Even before the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus reproved his disciples as “fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken” (Lk 24:25). The commentaries of Hebrews certainly affirm that a convincing Christological focus of Hebrews is at the heart of the book and specifically his supremacy, person and work of salvation (Bruce 1964:lii; Lane 1991:cxxxvii-cxliii; Lindars 1991:128-142) and not only of this book alone but of the New Testament (Goppelt 1981:3-5; Evans 2004:145). But this is not what Ellingworth is purporting. The crux of this interpretive principle concerns Christ’s pre-existence as the key not just a Christological interpretation of the Scriptures; “The author’s belief in the activity of Christ before the incarnation formed part of a tradition of Christological interpretation of OT texts which in all probability reached back in some form to Jesus himself” (Ellingworth 1993:42). Does this principle emanate from the book of Hebrews itself or is it superimposed from a perspective formed from outside of Hebrews?

Certainly there are signs of a pre-existent Christ in the book of Hebrews (1:2-3), but to state that this is the writer's hermeneutical key is grossly overstated. Motyer (1999:9-10) observes that the pre-existence of Christ is at odds with the opening thesis in Hebrews (1:1-2) which emphasizes the discontinuity in the method of God's revelation.

#### 1.4.5. *A Hermeneutic of Permission*

Hughes (1979) in his book, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, seeks to prove that the relationship between the Old Testament and the writing of the 'word of exhortation' can be defined as 'conceptual frames,' that is, "clusters of ideas employed in each cohere in discernibly similar patterns of relationships" (1979:103). Hughes maintains that there are concepts which are to be found in both which are reinterpreted in Hebrews, for example, priest, atonement and sacrifice are found in both but new vistas and redefinitions are presented in Hebrews. These shared ideas or paradigms Hughes calls 'frames' each of which points beyond itself in some way. These frames thus allow or permit a revised interpretation – a hermeneutic of permission.

The prologue of Hebrews is pivotal here as providing the interpretive key. The forms which God used in the former dispensation are in Hughes words "partial and piecemeal" (1979:103) which suggests that they point to something more substantial. That which is described as "πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως" (1:1) indicates that the true meaning was not disclosed but that only when seen retrospectively after the completion of the spoken message in the form of the Son, is the meaning understood and that relationship is permissible and perceived by those who have "a perspective of faith" (1979:104). Moreover, that which "is 'permitted' to the interpreter by the historical forms is thereby 'not excluded'" (1979:105) and is a "faith-determined reinterpretation" (1979:105) of the Old Testament texts as the texts themselves permit them, but do not themselves require. There is clearly continuity between Old Testament text and New Testament interpretation but it is guided and permitted by a "hermeneutic of faith" (1979:104-107, 118).



The advantage of this proposed approach for understanding Hebrew's hermeneutic is that the text is not understood as a forced twisting of Scripture to suit the needs of the present community (see 1.4.1 above) but rather Hebrews is presented as the model of Christian hermeneutics. The author of Hebrews is guided by the Old Testament and stays within the parameters (frames) set by Scripture itself. This approach approves the book of Hebrews as a legitimate interpretation of Scripture rather than a contrived one and that this interpretation pertains to the person and work of Christ.

Berkhof states that "it is well known that the New Testament interprets several passages of the Old Testament messianically, and in so doing, not only points to the presence of a mystical sense, in those particular passages, but also intimates that whole categories of related passages should be interpreted in a similar manner" (1950:141). In a real sense, Hughes is saying something very similar to Berkhof although their terminology is different. "In a word, the interpreter must determine the significance of the facts of history as a part of God's revelation of redemption" (Berkhof 1950:143).

In addition, this principle as presented by Hughes maintains that the interpretation of Scripture can only be rightly performed by the community of faith (1979:104-107,118). This principle is the statement which Scripture itself makes (Mt 13:11-17; Jn 3:3; 8:43; Rm 8:5-8; 1 Cor 2:13-15; 4:1; 2 Cor 4:4-6).

A concern however is that this approach can be understood as an opening of the door to all those of the household of faith who would try their hand at creative interpretation. If indeed the frames are those as found in Scripture, then where are they? Which are legitimate and which are not? What is to be used as a judge of a legitimate or illegitimate approach? Is it not possible not only to perceive a creative interpretation of a known frame but also to creatively define a frame itself with an interpretation that meets the criteria of any modern day interpreter of faith? Is this not what is alluded to in Attridge's assessment of Hughes book; "The modern interpreter of the sacred texts, like the author of Hebrews, takes over 'frames' or

patterns discerned in the text to be interpreted and invests those frames with a meaning appropriate to the situation of the interpreter” (1981:310).

Attridge doubts that Hebrews is “as self-consciously concerned with hermeneutical principles as Hughes seems to suggest” (1981:310). While this may indeed be the case, both as an assessment of Hughes’ research and in terms of the book of Hebrews itself, it cannot be denied that the writer of Hebrews’ interpretive methods are seen in his exegesis of the Old Testament passages and present themselves clearly albeit just below the surface of the matters which he addresses in the book. While I agree with Attridge that the writer is not “self-consciously concerned” with the presentation of hermeneutical principles in his book, the author of Hebrews is very much concerned to convey a clear and loud warning to his audience and in doing so, does not “self-consciously” attempt to hide his methods of Scriptural interpretation which are necessary in order for them to be swayed by God and the authority of His spoken word to them.

#### 1.4.6. *Hermeneutic of a Living Voice*

The idea here is that words or ideas are taken from one situation and utilised and developed or recontextualized in another. The crux of this hermeneutic is that as God is a living God, His voice is living and dynamically relevant. Attridge (1989:24) holds to this view when he says that there is clearly a process of decontextualizing demonstrated in that the Old Testament texts are appropriated as that which is spoken by or of Christ. He says this process is guided by the author’s own context that brings meaning to the text.

The phrasing of this principle was first presented by T. Blackstone in a doctoral dissertation (1995) and his approach is similar to Hughes except that a greater emphasis is laid on the aspect of God speaking dynamically, while Hughes’ ‘hermeneutic of permission’ is understood to be static and fixed. Blackstone also indicates that the author of Hebrews is inspired, directed and to some degree bound by the contexts of the original quotations. In this way, Hughes’ ‘hermeneutic of

permission' is qualified and limited and in this respect is different and wider to Attridge's contextually bounded view.

#### 1.4.7. *Typological Hermeneutic*

Typology has to do with the foreshadowing or prefiguring of persons, events and institutions in the Old Testament (the type) with later persons, events and things in the New (the antitype). Ellis calls typology "the basic approach of earliest Christianity toward the Old Testament" (2002:84). Guthrie (2003:288) calls this the "approach of choice among most evangelicals" but it is dealt with in far broader circles than this and is named by Goppelt in his classic work on this subject as a "spiritual perspective" (1939:183) rather than a system of interpretation and it is for this reason that Ellis (1985:209-211) lists it as a presupposition of New Testament interpretation and as a "historical and theological perspective" (2002:84). There are many who give more than a passing few words to the subject of types and their interpretation demonstrating that while it may be thought of as a presupposition, it is certainly a widespread one (Berkhof 1950:144-148; Caird 1959:49-54; Ellis 1957:128; Ellis 1978; 165-169; Ellis 1985:210-212; Snodgrass 1994:37-38).

Mickelsen defines typology as an interpreter finding correspondence between "a person, event, or thing in the Old Testament and a person, event or thing closer to or contemporaneous with a New Testament writer." (1963:237). He takes pains to draw a distinction between analogy and typology, where analogy is the search of a secondary hidden meaning behind the obvious one and is a non valid means of exegesis whereas typology is historically oriented in that it is the search for links within the "historical framework of revelation" between persons, events and things and therefore valid (1963:238). Lane notes a shift in the historical definition and the modern definition (1991:cxxiii). The modern definition of typology has moved away from prefigurations in Scripture to emphasizing "historical correspondences retrospectively recognized within the consistent redemptive activity of God" (Davidson 1981:94). For Mickelsen (1963:237, 240), and Tolar (2002:28), the guiding principle ensuring typology as a valid form of exegesis is the pre-understanding of a

history-controlling God who can bring into being the type and later antitype demonstrating corresponding characteristics as understood by the author.

This ties up with the introductory remark of the author of Hebrews who acknowledges that God is the one who spoke long ago through the prophets “*polumerw~ kai polutropw~*” but who now speaks “in a Son.” God is the one who weaves history to suit his own purpose such that what he accomplishes earlier may be repeated again later in somewhat altered form.

#### 1.5. LITERATURE RELATED TO THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE USED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Much of the literature has been written on the use of the Old Testament across the New Testament (Ellis 1985:199-219; Ellis 1978; 147-172; Kaiser 1985; Nicole 1994:13-28; Snodgrass 1994:29-51) or when the focus is narrowed to looking specifically at the book of Hebrews, the citations themselves, rather than the IF's, are typically the focus (Barth 1962:53-78; Ellis 1991:79-82; Ellingworth 1993:37-42; Guthrie 1997:841-850; Howard 1968:208-212; Lane 1991:cxii-cxxiv; McCullough 1979:363-379; Moyise 2001:98-108; Rendall 1955:214-220; Thomas 1964:303-325).

Two of the most insightful pieces of literature with regards to the IF's in Hebrews are that of Barth (1962:53-78) and to a lesser degree, Burns (1996:587-607). Barth's section on the IF's (1962:58-65) is especially noteworthy although I disagree somewhat with his conclusion, “Exegesis is for the author of Hebrews the hearing participation in the dialogue that goes on with God and between God and man...Exegesis is for this author participation in the dialogue of the Bible” (1962:64). Although this is defined earlier as “the willingness to listen and the invitation to heed” (1962:61), I believe this statement overplays the role of the listener as will become evident later in this document and especially so in light of the author's role as a listener and the degree to which he participates in the “dialogue of the Bible.”

## 1.6. CLOSING COMMENTS REGARDING RELATED LITERATURE

It must be recognised that many authors have made valuable and substantial contributions in terms of the commentaries and literature about the book of Hebrews.

Yet fewer still have looked at the role of the IF's in any great detail throughout the New Testament, and fewer still have combined these two contributions into a meaningful whole in order to derive the hermeneutics of the author of Hebrews. That is not to say that there is not a treasure trove of helpful literature on the book of Hebrews, yet, the importance of the IF's generally and specifically have been neglected as this chapter has explored.

## 1.7. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to examine the IF's in the book of Hebrews and using these to seek to understand the hermeneutic of the author.

In order to do this, the approach will be as follows;

1. Establish a working list of direct quotations as best as possible and motivate the choice in light of the fact that there is no consensus on the number of quotations in Hebrews (Lane 1991:cxv).

2. I will compare and contrast the introductory formulae with one another in the book and will categorise and systematise them with a view to establishing some of the issues regarding the hermeneutics of the author pertaining to the Old Testament.

The following aspects will receive particular attention:

- Analyse and explain the author's 'verb of saying' and the use of the various tenses evident in the introductory formulae.

- Analyse the subject evident in the introductory formulae.
  - Establish and seek to explain the author's Trinitarian view.
  - Establish and briefly seek to explain the author's choice of the Old Testament books quoted in order to determine if the author had a particular methodology e.g. if a group of books had a greater authority and therefore is quoted more often
3. Compare and contrast the IF's used by the author of Hebrews with that of the rest of the New Testament, in order to determine if his approach was the same, similar or different to the other New Testament writers. Examine the use of quotations in the wider early church setting in order to compare and contrast these with that found in Hebrews.
4. Propose an 'author's hermeneutic' based on these findings and show the relationship to the rest of the book especially the introductory thesis in the first four verses.
5. Contrast this with the contemporary approaches in order to make application into the context of the church and especially with regards to preaching the Bible.

## CHAPTER II - THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE - COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

Regarding the quotations themselves, Earle Ellis (1985:199) observes that, “the variations, then, become an important clue to discover not only the writer’s interpretation of the individual Old Testament passage but also his perspective of the Old Testament as a whole.” The focus in this chapter is to look specifically at what the author states about the Old Testament quotation. Our concern is not to look primarily at the quotations themselves, although this is explored briefly under 2.4.2 nor is there a textual comparison of the quotations in Hebrews with that of the LXX or other versions, the study of which has indeed great value and much to offer, but is not dealt with at all here.

### 2.1. WHAT CONSTITUTES AN INTRODUCTORY FORMULA?

This would seem like the logical place to start; “What does an introductory formula look like?” Technically, in its widest sense, an introductory formula (IF) introduces a quotation derived from any external source. Formulas of quotation generally employ verbs of “saying” or “writing” and typically, attribute the quotation to a book or writer or a story (Ellis 1985:199).

#### 2.1.1. *Difficulties in Identifying an Introductory Formula*

Nicole (1994:18-25) gives the following as reasons regarding the differences between the forms of quotation evident in the New Testament and the source in the Old:

##### 2.1.1.1. The Necessity of Translating their Sources

The New Testament writers did not have the luxury of critical academic discipline applied over hundreds of years yielding the most accurate translations as we have today (Nicole 1994:18-19). Either they had to make their own translations or use the translations of others at their disposal. Typically a translation of the Masoretic Text

or the Septuagint was employed. Research indicates that there is evidence that two recensions, namely Codices A (Alexandrinus) and Codices B (Vaticanus), were employed (see Lane 1991:cxviii). Where the author varies from both of these, there is evidence to believe that he was familiar with the interpretations of Philo (Bruce 1964:xlix) and perhaps employed citations from an unknown source (McCullough 1979:363-379; Thomas 1964:325).

#### 2.1.1.2. The Diversity of Introductory Formulae

It is exceedingly difficult to give an exact number of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament as the variation in use range from a definite quotation introduced by a clear formula stating the author's intention to quote a passage on the one hand and a vague allusion or echo of a text on the other. This spectrum of intertextual reference, with explicit citation on the one extreme and vague echo on the other, recedes into subliminal obscurity such that the intertextual relationship becomes virtually indeterminate to the point that it is difficult to know if one is hearing an echo at all or perhaps imagining it (Hays 1989:23). This is especially the case in Hebrews as there are certain passages that are formally repeated in typical midrash fashion (e.g. Ps 95:7-11; 110:1-4) and other passages that are informally presented such that any degree of confidence in affirming an absolute listing of biblical quotations is impossible (Longenecker 1975:164, 167). The terminology regarding the type of citation that is used today reflects the lack of clarity of clear designations resulting from the wide range of examples that are found. Some of these terms include; direct quotation, indirect quotation, allusion, echo, paraphrase and midrash.

#### 2.1.1.3. No Strict Rules of Interpretation are Evident

We must also keep in mind that the New Testament writers did not quote their sources in a disciplined scientific manner as we do today. As stated, earlier, many would go so far as stating that "our author felt free to alter the words of Scripture" (Attridge 1989:23). Others, especially conservatives, would not typically hold such a view which is thought to undermine the authority and inerrancy of Scripture.



Suffice to say at this point that there were a number of issues which contributed to the writer's freedom to quote a source in a manner which we consider loose and undisciplined (Moyise 2001:4). The New Testament writers were not subject to the same strict rules in force today when it comes to the quoting another's material. Today, any written work, including one's own, must be quoted in an exact manner and if the material is reshaped in any manner whatsoever, acknowledgement must still be given to the original author and source. The closest we see of any acknowledgement by the New Testament writers is the IF "it is written" or "this was to fulfil what was said by the prophet," where the source is occasionally named. Hanson (1988:300) cautions the modern reader against making the mistake of judging the writers by our standards of quotation and scriptural exegesis.

Thus, it was not necessary for the quotation to conform to textually stringent rules, nor was it necessary for the quotation to immediately follow the introductory type phrases. The writers did not have the luxury of quotation marks, to indicate the beginning and ending of a quotation, nor of punctuation marks, which assist the reader in the reading of any written document. If we are unclear as to where the quotation begins, it is more difficult still to determine, in places, where the quotation ends.

In light of these considerations, it is not surprising that the findings of those who have sought to determine the number of citations of the Old Testament in the book of Hebrews have varied greatly; Bratcher counts 40 quotations (1969:57-67), Longenecker (1975:164) discerned 38, Spicq 36 (1952, I:331), Howard (1968:211), Guthrie (2003:272) and Ellingworth (1993:37) all count 35, Michel 32 (1959:81), Lane 31 (1991:cxvi) and Westcott (1909:472) and Caird (1959:47) each found only 29.

## 2.2. OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN HEBREWS

*The Greek New Testament (United Bible Societies, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition)* includes its own index of quotations and lists the following 37 instances for the book of Hebrews;

**Table 1 - Index of quotations from The Greek New Testament (UBS 4th Ed.)**

No.	Ref	OT ref	No.	Ref	OT ref
1	1:5a	Ps 2:7	20	7:1-2	Gn 14:17-20
2	1:5b	2 Sm 7:14	21	7:17,21	Ps 110:4
3	1:6	Dt 32:43 LXX	22	8:5	Ex 25:40
4	1:7	Ps 104:4 LXX	23	8:8-12	Jr 31:31-34
5	1:8-9	Ps 45:6-7	24	9:20	Ex 24:8
6	1:10-12	Ps 102:25-27 LXX	25	10:5-7	Ps 40:6-8
7	1:13	Ps 110:1	26	10:16-17	Jr 31:33-34
8	2:6-8	Ps 8:4-6 LXX	27	10:30	Dt 32:35-36
9	2:12	Ps 22:22	28	10:37-38	Hab 2:3-4 LXX
10	2:13a	Is 8:17 LXX	29	11:5	Gn 5.24 LXX
11	2:13b	Is 8:18	30	11:18	Gn 21:12
12	3:7-11	Ps 95:7-11	31	11:21	Gn 47:31 LXX
13	3:15	Ps 95:7-8 LXX	32	12:5-6	Pr 3:11-12 LXX
14	4:3,5	Ps 95:11	33	12:20	Ex 19:12-13
15	4:4	Gn 2:2	34	12:21	Dt 9:19
16	4:7	Ps 95:7-8 LXX	35	12:26	Hg 2:6 LXX
17	5:5	Ps 2:7	36	13:5	Dt 31:6-8
18	5:6	Ps 110:4	37	13:6	Ps 118:6 LXX
19	6:13-14	Gn 22:16-17			

Barth (1962:54) insists that there must be a distinction between direct quotations and indirect quotations or illusions, that is, quotations which have a formula of introduction and those without and indeed, there are both. The intention is to work toward a list which contains only introductory formulae. These references must be analysed individually with a view to deriving a list from which to observe the comments of the author before a passage is quoted.

Clearly, some of the quotations in the above list should be split and dealt with individually as the passage is quoted more than once, between which the author adds some comments of his own. From Table 1 above, these include quotation 14

(4:3, 5), 21 (7:17, 21) and 27 (10:30). Secondly, two quotations should be added to this list as quotation 25 (10:5-7) is repeated in 10:8 and again in 10:9 with a brief comment between these by the author which must be analysed. Thirdly, three quotations are given without any preceding comment by the author whatsoever and are therefore to be removed from the list. These include quotation number 20 (7:1-2), 29 (11:5) and 31 (11:21). These changes give the following list in Table 2.

Table 2 – Revised index of quotations

No.	Ref	OT ref
1	1:5a	Ps 2:7
2	1:5b	2 Sm 7:14
3	1:6	Dt 32:43 LXX
4	1:7	Ps 104:4 LXX
5	1:8-9	Ps 45:6-7
6	1:10-12	Ps 102:25:27
7	1:13	Ps 110:1
8	2:6-8	Ps 8:4-6 LXX
9	2:12	Ps 22:22
10	2:13a	Is 8:17
11	2:13b	Is 8:18
12	3:7-11	Ps 95:7-11
13	3:15	Ps 95:7-8 LXX
14	4:3	Ps 95:11
15	4:4	Gn 2:2
16	4:5	Ps 95:11
17	4:7	Ps 95:7-8 LXX
18	5:5	Ps 2:7
19	5:6	Ps 110:4
20	6:13-14	Gn 22:16-17

No.	Ref	OT ref
21	7:17	Ps 110:4
22	7:21	Ps 110:4
23	8:5	Ex 25:40
24	8:8-12	Jr 31:31-34
25	9:20	Ex 24:8
26	10:5-7	Ps 40:6-8
27	10:8	Ps 40:6
28	10:9	Ps 40:7-8
29	10:16-17	Jr 31:33-34
30	10:30a	Dt 32:35
31	10:30b	Dt 32:36
32	10:37-38	Hab 2:3-4 LXX
33	11:18	Gn 21:12
34	12:5-6	Pr 3:11-12
35	12:20	Ex 19:12-13
36	12:21	Dt 9:19
37	12:26	Hg 2:6
38	13:5	Dt 31:6,8
39	13:6	Ps 118:6

Guthrie (1997:846-849) agrees with this list but with four exceptions. Firstly, he adds 3:13 as a quotation from Ps 95:7-8. The single word, “Today” is repeated from the quotation that appears in verse 7. There is no reason to believe that he is reciting the passage again but simply emphasising a word from the quotation. Secondly, Guthrie lists 12:20 as an allusion and not a quotation. This is well founded as while there is an expectation that a quotation should follow the words “For they could not endure what was commanded,” the textual differences are too great to warrant the category of a formal quotation. Thirdly, Guthrie neglects 7:17 altogether but lists the same quotation in 7:21. This seems to be an oversight for the word order in both instances is identical and therefore must be retained. Lastly, Guthrie lists 10:8 and 10:9 as a single quotation. Clearly, the writer of Hebrews breaks the quotation with the clarifying comment for the sake of his readers, “αἱτῆσι~ κατανομῶν προσφέρωνται” (10:8 which are offered by the law). Having broken the quotation, he modifies the citation from τότε εἶπον (then I said) to τότε εἶπεν (then he said) and continues the quotation. Therefore, this example should not be excluded.

Six quotations are listed directly after a preceding one in a catena fashion between which are used the conjunctions *kai*; (“and;” quotation number 6 (1:10-12)), *kai; pal* in (“and again;” quotation number 2 (1:5b), 10 (2:13a), 11 (2:13b), 31 (10:30b)) and the quotation in 16 (4:5) which similarly reads *kai; eñ toutw pal* in (“and in this *place* again”). These are removed from the following list as these phrases do not comprise an introductory formula and should not be taken into account. Thus, we arrive at the list of 32 introductory formulae in Table 3 above. The reference shown is the reference of the IF and not of the quotation.

**Table 3 – The Introductory Formulae in Hebrews (showing subsequent Old Testament quotation)**

No.	Ref	OT ref
1	1:5a	Ps 2:7
2	1:6	Dt 32:43 LXX
3	1:7	Ps 104:4 LXX
4	1:8-9	Ps 45:6-7
5	1:13	Ps 110:1
6	2:6	Ps 8:4-6 LXX
7	2:11-12	Ps 22:22
8	3:7	Ps 95:7-11
9	3:15	Ps 95:7-8 LXX
10	4:3	Ps 95:11
11	4:4	Gn 2:2
12	4:7	Ps 95:7-8 LXX
13	5:5	Ps 2:7
14	5:6	Ps 110:4
15	6:13-14	Gn 22:16-17
16	7:17	Ps 110:4
17	7:21	Ps 110:4

No.	Ref	OT ref
18	8:5	Ex 25:40
19	8:8	Jr 31:31-34
20	9:20	Ex 24:8
21	10:5	Ps 40:6-8
22	10:8	Ps 40:6
23	10:9	Ps 40:7-8
24	10:15	Jr 31:33-34
25	10:30	Dt 32:35
26	10:36	Hab 2:3-4 LXX
27	11:18	Gn 21:12
28	12:5	Pr 3:11-12
29	12:21	Dt 9:19
30	12:26	Hg 2:6
31	13:5	Dt 31:6,8
32	13:6	Ps 118:6

## 2.3. THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE IN HEBREWS

Table 3 above (which gives an exhaustive list of the IF's found in Hebrews and the basis for this list) is expanded below with each verb found in the IF being parsed and listed.

**Table 4 - The Introductory Formulae in Hebrews (showing verb, tense, mood, voice and root word)**

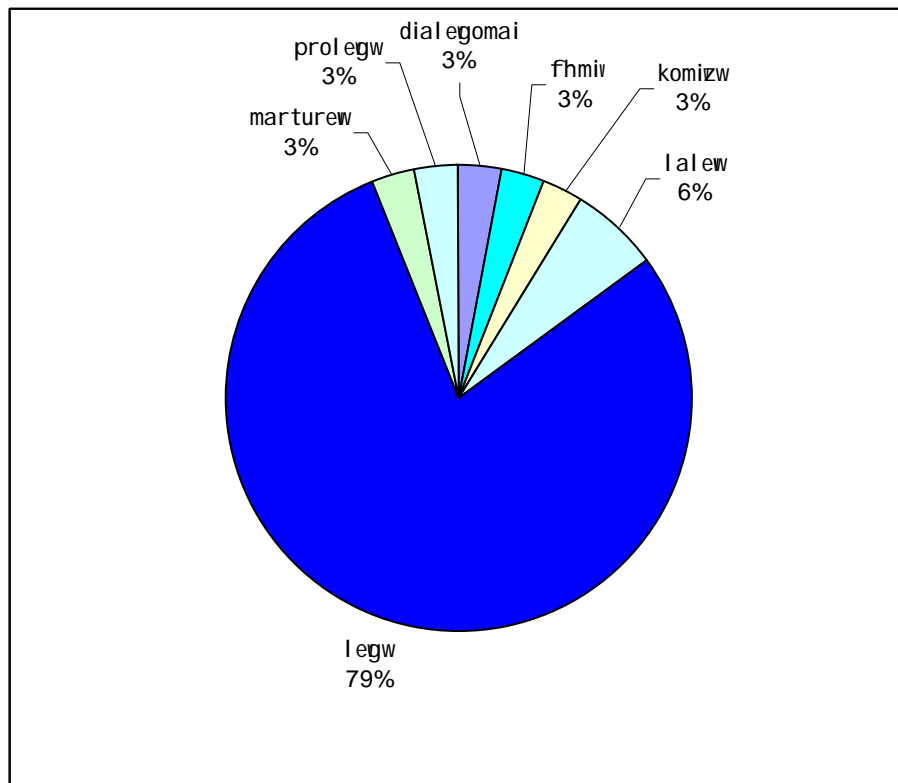
No	Ref	IF	Greek	Verb	Tense	Mood	Voice	Root
1	1:5a	For to which of the angels did He ever say,	tini gar eipen pote twn aggelwn	eipen	second aorist	indicative	active	legw
2	1:6	And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,	otan de; pal in eipsagaghaton prwtotokon eij- thn oikoumenhn, legei	legei	present	indicative	active	legw
3	1:7	And of the angels He says,	kai; pro;- men tou;- aggelou;- legei	legei	present	indicative	active	legw
4	1:8	But to the Son <i>He says</i> ,	pro;- de; ton uibn					
5	1:13	But to which of the angels has He ever said,	pro;- tina de; twn aggelwn eifhken pote	eifhken	perfect	indicative	active	legw
6	2:6	But one testified in a certain place, saying,	diemarturato de;pou ti;- legwn	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
7	2:11- 12	He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,	ouk epaiscunetai apel fou;- aujtu;- kalein legwn	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
8	3:7	Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,	dio; kaqw;- legei to; pneuma to; agion	legei	present	indicative	active	legw
9	3:15	while it is said,	ejn twæl egesqai	legesqai	present	infinitive	passive	legw
10	4:3	For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said,	eijsercomeqa gar eij- thn katapausin oil pisteusante;- , kaqw;- eifhken	eifhken	perfect	indicative	active	legw
11	4:4	For He has said in a certain place concerning the seventh <i>day</i> in this way:	eifhken gar pou peri; th- ebdomh- outw-	eifhken	perfect	indicative	active	legw
12	4:7	Again He designates a certain day, "Today," saying in David after such a long time as it has been said,	pal in tina; orizei hmeran, Shmeron, ejn Dabid legwn meta; tosouton cronon, kaqw;- proeirhtai	legwn proeirhtai	present perfect	participle indicative	active passive	legw prolegw
13	5:5	So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but He who said to Him,	outw- kai; olCristo;- ouj eauton ejloxasen genhqhnai arcierea ajl l jollalhsa- pro- aujton	lalhsa-	aorist	participle	active	lalew
14	5:6	as <i>He</i> also says in another <i>place</i> ,	kaqw;- kai; ejn elterwæl legei	legei	present	indicative	active	legw

No	Ref	IF	Greek	Verb	Tense	Mood	Voice	Root
15	6:13-14	He swore by Himself, saying,	w̄nosēn kaq̄ jebutou legwn	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
16	7:17	For He testifies,	martureitai gar oft̄i	martureitai	present	indicative	passive	marturew
17	7:21	but He with an oath by Him who said to Him,	olde; meta; orkwosia- dia; tou legonto- pro;- aujton	legonto-	present	participle	active	legw
18	8:5	as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said,	kaqw;- kecrhmatistai Mwush- mel lwn epiteleia thn skhnhn, Ora gar fhsin	fhsin	present	indicative	none stated	fhmiv
19	8:8	Because finding fault with them, He says,	memfomeno- gar aujtou;- legei	legei	present	indicative	active	legw
20	9:20	sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying	kai; ubswpou aujtoite to; bibl̄ion kai; panta ton laon efrantisen legwn, (Touto)	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
21	10:5	Therefore, when He came into the world, He says,	diō; eijsērcomeno- eij-ton kosmon legei	legei	present	indicative	active	legw
22	10:8	Previously saying,	ahwteron legwn oft̄i	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
23	10:9	Then he said	tote eijrhken	eijrhken	perfect	indicative	active	legw
24	10:15	But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,	marturei de; h̄min kai; to; pneuma to; agion: meta; gar to; eijrhkenai	eijrhkenai	perfect	infinitive	active	legw
25	10:30a	For we know Him who said,	oijlamen gar ton eiponta	eiponta	second aorist	participle	active	legw
26	10:36	so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:	iha to; qelhma tou qeou poihsante- komishsqe thn epaggelian	komishsqe	aorist	subjunctive	middle	komizw
27	11:18	of whom it was said,	pro;- oh ej al hqh oft̄i	ej al hqh	aorist	indicative	passive	lalew
28	12:5	and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons,	kai; ekl̄elhsye th- paraklhsew-, h̄ti- umin w- uibi- dial egetai	dial egetai	present	indicative	middle	dial egomai
29	12:21	And so terrifying was the sight, that Moses said,	kairoutw foberon hh to; fantazomenon, Mwush- eipen	eipen	second aorist	indicative	active	legw
30	12:26	And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying,	ouj h̄ fwnh; thn ghen esal eusen tote, nun de; ephggel tai legwn	legwn	present	participle	active	legw
31	13:5	for He Himself has said,	aujto- gar eijrhken	eijrhken	perfect	indicative	active	legw
32	13:6	so that we boldly say,	w̄ste qarrounta- hma- legein	legein	present	infinitive	active	legw

### 2.3.1. Analysis of the Verbs Appearing in the Introductory Formulae

Firstly, it is worth noting that every citation has only one verb per IF except citation 12 (4:7) which has two verbs, while citation 4 (1:8) has none. Thus, there are 32 verbs in the list of 32 IF's.

**Figure 1 - Verb roots in the Introductory Formulae**



Clearly, the most preferred verb is the verb *legw* which, in its various tenses, is used 25 times in 32 IF's (79 percent) and is analysed further below. The next preferred verb is the verb *lalew*, which appears far more infrequently (6 percent) with only 2 instances (5:5; 11:18) both used in the aorist tense. The remaining five verbs all appear only once (3 percent) each and are *prolegw* (4:7), *marturew* (4:7), *dialegomai* (12:5), *fhmiv*(8:5) and lastly, *komizw* (10:36). The latter verb is unlike all the rest as it is used in the context of a promise which the reader 'may receive' and then Habbakuk 2:3-4 is quoted. It is doubtful that it should fall into the category of IF's and perhaps the two words "eti gar" is the more legitimate IF which does not contain a verb.



Thus, excluding this last instance, only 6 verbs are used, all of which are used to describe speech. This is clearly seen from the definitions below.

### 2.3.2. *The Meaning of the 'Speech Verbs'*

The *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semitic Domains* (Louw & Nida:1988) defines these verbs as follows;

- *legw*; *fhmiv* - “to speak or talk, with apparent focus upon the content of what is said - ‘to say, to talk, to tell, to speak’” (1988:397).
- *lalew* - “to speak or talk, with the possible implication of more informal usage” (1988:397).
- *prolegw* - “to speak beforehand or in advance - ‘to say already’ or in written discourse, ‘to quote above’” (1988:399).
- *marturew* - “to provide information about a person or an event concerning which the speaker has direct knowledge - ‘to witness’” (1988:418).
- *dialegomai* - “to speak in a somewhat formal setting and probably implying a more formal use of language - ‘to address, to make a speech’” (1988:392).

Clearly, the emphasis in the IF's in Hebrews is on that which is said and not that which is written; the writer uses words expressing diction. This is in marked contrast with the rest of the NT whose writers typically use an IF pertaining to that which is written (*kaqw*; *gegraptai* “as it is written”) but the author of Hebrews never uses *grafw* (write) or any of its variations to introduce a quotation (Lane 1991:cxvii).

Interestingly, the author of Hebrews reserves the written aspect of Scripture in only one place; “He who came into the world...said ‘Behold I have come – In the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will, O God’” (10:7). Christ alone submits himself to that which is written, but contrastingly, the readers of Hebrews are to hear what is said (Barth 1962:58-59).

The quotations are presented as living spoken words not as previously spoken recorded instructions. Lane states that “the text of the OT is presented dynamically...the writer of Hebrews usually introduces the words of the OT as the direct speaking of God” (1991:cxvii). And thus the focus is on what is said and must be heard (3:7; 3:15; 4:7) rather than on what is written and must be read. Commenting on the uniqueness of the method employed by the author, Lane writes,

Although the representation of a biblical quotation as the word that God is speaking to the audience *at that moment* can be documented from other Jewish-hellenistic homilies..., this manner of presenting the OT text is without parallel elsewhere in the NT.

Regarding the meaning of the verb *legw*, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (undated:1005) states that,

A characteristic of *legō* is that it refers to the purport or sentiment of what is said as well as the connection of the words...In comparison with *laleō*, *legō* refers especially to the substance of what is said, *laleō*, to the words conveying the utterance.

By using *legw*, the writer causes the focus of the reader’s attention to fall primarily on that which is said, the quotations from the OT and not primarily on his own interpretation or exegetical understanding of that which he has written. In this way he roots his argument clearly in that which is spoken and not primarily on whom it is that speaks. This will be addressed again in the next section.

### 2.3.3. *The Use of the Verb legw*

The verb *legw* appears 25 times in all accounting for 73 percent of all the verbs used in the introductory formulae. It is used 16 times (64 percent) in the present tense (1:6, 7; 2:6, 12; 3:7, 15; 4:7; 5:6; 6:13-14; 7:21; 8:8; 9:20; 10:5, 8; 12:26; 13:6 ), 6 times (24 percent) in the perfect tense (1:13; 4:3, 4; 10:9, 15; 13:5) and 3 times (12 percent) in the second aorist tense (1:5a; 10:30a; 12:21). While the English verbs concentrate on when an event took place, the Greek language is far more taken with the type of question which, regarding an event, asks; “Am I conceiving of it as protracted or as virtually instantaneous?” (Moule 1953:5). The event is thus ‘punctiliar’ (focused into

a point) or 'linear' (protracted like a line). It would be helpful at this time to review the tense of the verbs used in the IF's in the book of Hebrews.

**Figure 2 - Tenses of all the verbs used in the Introductory Formulae of Hebrews**

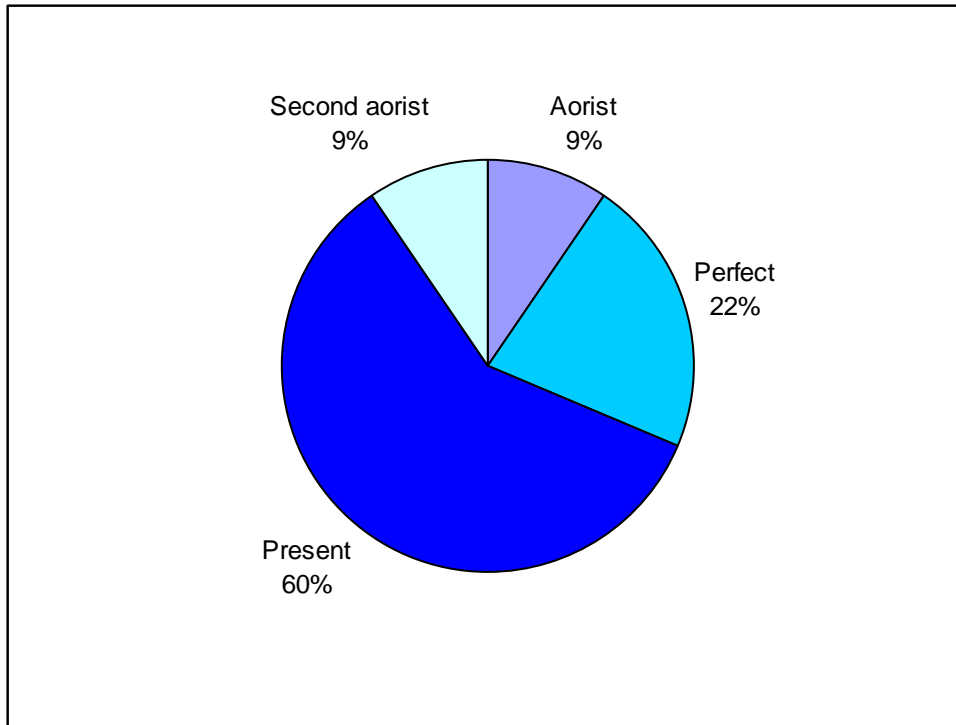
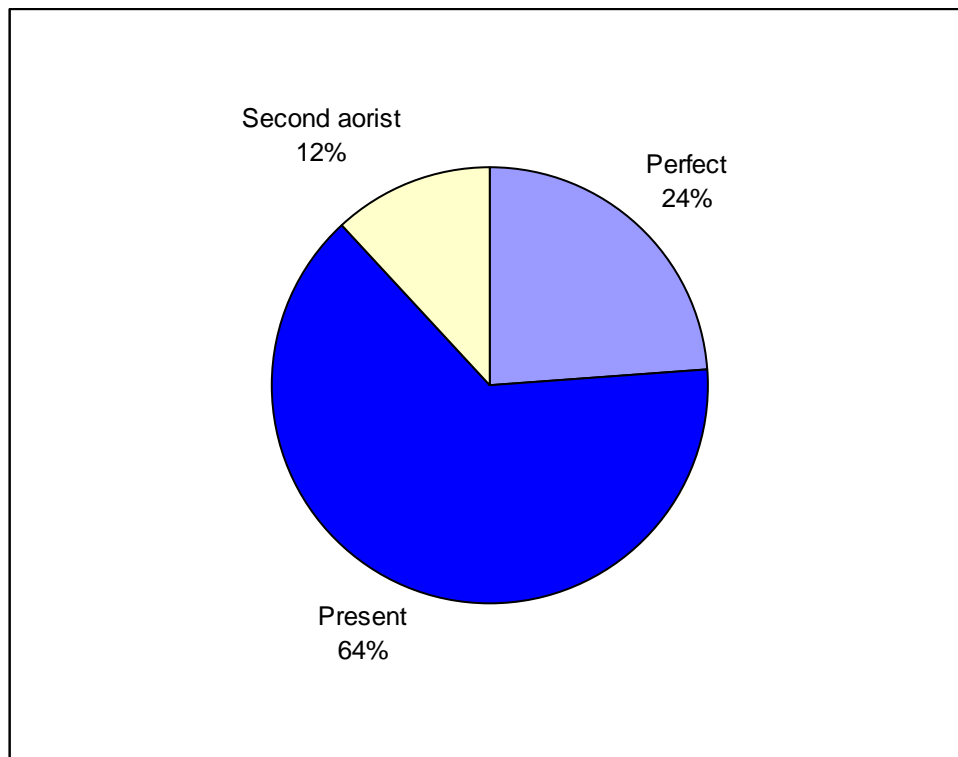


Figure 3 - Tenses of the *legw* verbs used in the Introductory Formulae of Hebrews



### 2.3.3.1. The Present Tense Use

We have seen that the vast majority of the usage of the verb *legw* occurs in the present tense. This tense conveys a linear action or an incomplete durative action which is either timeless or taking place in present time (Blass & Debrunner 1961:166). Of the 16 times *legw* is used in the present tense, half of these appear in the participle mood, active voice translated as 'saying'. The verb appears 6 times in the indicative mood, active voice ('says') and the remaining two occurrences appear in the infinitive mood, once as an articular infinitive after *ej* rendered 'while it is said' and lastly as a consequence after *wste* translated 'so that we say.'

Thus, the emphasis of the writer in quoting the OT is not primarily on what God has said in the past, which perhaps has relevance in a particular manner today, but on what God says and is saying to his readers. Lane (1991:47A. 1) remarks

God spoke! As the argument unfolds, it is alternatively God, the Son, the Holy Spirit who speaks. The careful strands of the development are then taken up and reaffirmed in a final climactic warning: “Be careful that you do not disregard the one who is speaking” (12:25).”

### 2.3.3.2. The Perfect Tense Use

The perfect tense indicates a condition or state resulting from the past action (Blass & Debrunner 1961:166) or what is called the “continuance of completed action” (Blass & Debrunner 1961:175). It could also be described as a punctiliar event in the past, related in its effects to the present such that the Greek tense is concerned with result (Moule 1953:13).

The Greek word εἶρηκεν is translated typically as “has said” which highlights the past action but fails to convey adequately the present state that results from that which was said. The writer quotes 6 passages using this tense (1:13; 4:3, 4; 10:9, 15; 13:5), implying that God has spoken in the past but that which He has said still has a bearing on the present. All of these uses are given in the indicative active, except one which is an articular infinitive after μετα rendered ‘after he had said’ (10:15). One of the IF’s contain two verbs (4:7) the second of which is also a perfect tense of προλεγω which refers the reader back to initial quotation in 3:7-8.

### 2.3.3.3. The Second Aorist Tense Use

The remaining 3 instances of the verb λεγω appear in the second (strong) aorist tense. This tense is the simple, punctiliar, instantaneous, occurrence without any regard to its continuance or frequency nor with regard to present, future or past (Moule 1953:10). This tense of the verb λεγω would indicate that God spoke at a single point in time without regard to its continued significance. So why, then, is this tense used at all when the writer consistently seeks, in the other tenses, to convey to his readers that God speaks still? We will look at each instance in order to answer this question.

In 1:5a the strong aorist ειπεν is used to highlight the fact that God has never ever said at any point in time to any angel, “You are my Son.” The writer’s point is that

this has never transpired and therefore cannot have any bearing on the present and the tense is appropriate.

The second instance of the author's use of the strong aorist tense appears in 10:30a and is more complex. Unlike the other two instances which are in the indicative mood, this is a participle, *eiponta*, which is typically translated as "having done spoken" or "having said." Participles typically express something which is dependent on the main verb and this typically gives a clue to the interpretation of the participle. Typically, the aorist participle represents a 'punctiliar' action, which occurs prior to what is referred to in the main verb (Moule 1953:99). In this case the main verb is *oĩdamen*, which gives the translation, "for we know (perfect tense) Him who said (second aorist)..." The sense here is that which God had said (the Old Testament quotation) preceded our knowing Him, which is perfectly correct if the "we" here refers to the readers of Hebrews as seems probable.

The last occurrence of the second aorist verb *eipen*, appears in 12:21 as Moses' words are recorded "I am greatly afraid and trembling" (Dt 9:19). This is Moses' verbal response to the sight and sound of God's presence on Mount Sinai; it is a punctiliar phrase which has no bearing at all for the readers for as the passage indicates, "you have not come to...the sound of words which made the hearers beg that no further word be spoken to them" (Heb 12:18-19). That was then, in a one-time, obsolete, aging era, but today, as the writer of Hebrews emphasises, "but you have come...to God...and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks better than of Abel" (Heb 12:22-24). The experience of the readers of Hebrews was different because they are under the new covenant of grace not under the covenant of works and fear.

All of these are punctiliar statements which serve as reminders of what has been said (or in the case of the first, not said) at a point in time none of which have any bearing or significance in the present. By this I mean that the first occurrence has never been said, the second is a technical usage which indicates the sequence of events and the last does not apply for we "have not come to the mountain..." of Sinai like Moses but now come to Mount Zion by "Jesus the Mediator." Thus, each of the Aorist verbs is

perfectly appropriate and correct and in no manner detracts from the use of the present and perfect tense and significance.

#### 2.3.4. *Analysis of the Subjects and Objects Appearing in the Introductory Formulae*

While the previous sub-division was primarily concerned with the verbs employed in the IF's, here the focus shifts to the nouns and pronouns in the IF's. Who is it that speaks, or spoke and to whom? The subject and object are often identified in the IF. Moreover, the subject 'of conversation' is evident in places and is included for further clarification.

##### 2.3.4.1. The Speaker Identified in the Introductory Formula

Perhaps the assumption has been made that the speaker of the OT is always God but is this true in every instance? Unlike other citations from New Testament writers, the speakers are generally not identified as the prophets of old, except for three of the thirty-two instances; those being David (4:7) and Moses twice (9:20 and 12:21). Nor can the phrase "he says" be translated as "it says" referring to the Law or to a prophetic book, as the context identifies the speaker plainly in most instances (Barth 1962:59). So who is it that speaks the words of the OT?

The answer to this question is complicated by the writer's use of the word 'He', either from the personal pronoun (13:6) or more frequently, the third person singular ending of the verbs employed as is common in Greek. In the IF's alone, 'He' is used in 22 of the 32 phrases. This 'He' is often, but not always, clarified a few lines earlier. In fact, including the case variations of all these words, 'He' (αὐτοῦ) especially in its third person singular form ending of the verb is used more than 'God' (Θεοῦ) and 'Son' (Υἱοῦ) put together. Moreover, the title 'Lord' (κυριοῦ, 16 times) is used interchangeably for both God the Father (1:10) and the Son (13:20). All this makes for difficult interpretation of the subject 'He'.

Warfield (1948:324) states with examples that there are four types of subject identified in the introductions to citations; firstly, where the subject is expressly

identified, secondly, where the subject is to be identified from the preceding context, thirdly, where the subject to be identified from by the reader from “general knowledge” and lastly where the subject is not obvious at all. Thus, in analysing the author’s use of ‘He,’ the subject and object must be derived carefully in order to answer this question with any possibility of accuracy. The following table is therefore a humble attempt at an identification of the speaker, to whom the speaker is speaking and the subject of conversation.



**Table 5 – Introductory Formulae in Hebrews (showing speaker, hearer and subject of conversation)**

No	Ref	IF	Greek	Who speaks	Identified as	To whom	About whom/what
1	1:5a	For to which of the angels did He ever say,	tini gar eipen pote tw n aggel wn	He	God	Son and not to any angel	Son
2	1:6	And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,	otan de; pal in ejsagaghaton prwtotokon eij- thn oikoumenhn, legei	He	God	angels as a command or unknown	Son (firstborn)
3	1:7	And of the angels He says,	kai; pro;- men tou- aggel ou- legei	He	God	unknown	Angels
4	1:8	But to the Son,	pro;- de; ton uion	No verb and no pers. pronoun	God	Son	Son
5	1:13	But to which of the angels has He ever said,	pro;- tina de; tw n aggel wn eijhken pote	He	God	Son and not any angel	Son
6	2:6	But one testified in a certain place, saying,	Diemarturato dev pourti- legwn	someone	OT prophet	unknown	Son
7	2:11-12	He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,	ouk epaiscunetai adel fou;- aujtu;- kalein legwn	He	Jesus	Father	those who are being sanctified
8	3:7	Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,	di o; kaqw;- legei to; pneuma to; agion	Holy Spirit	Holy Spirit	you (readers)	you (your fathers)
9	3:15	while it is said,	ej tw a legesqai	not specified	Holy Spirit	you (readers)	you
10	4:3	For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said,	eijsercomeqa gar eij- thn katapausin oil pisteusante-, kaqw;- eijhken	He	God	unknown	they (fathers)
11	4:4	For He has said in a certain place concerning the seventh <i>day</i> in this way:	eijhken gar pou peri; th- ebdomh- outw-	He	God	unknown	God
12	4:7	Again He designates a certain day, "Today," saying in David after such a long time as it has been said,	pal in tina; orizei hmeran, Shmeron, ej Dabid legwn meta; tosouton cronon, kaqw;- proeirhtai	He (in David)	God	you (readers)	You
13	5:5	So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but He who said to Him,	outw- kai; ol Cristo- ouc ebuton eptokasen genhqhnai ajcierea ajl jol lalhsa- pro;- aujton	He	God	Christ	Son
14	5:6	as <i>He</i> also says in another <i>place</i> ,	kaqw;- kai; ej elterw a legei	He	God	You (Christ)	Son
15	6:13-14	He swore by Himself, saying,	wmosen kaq jebutou legwn	He	God	Abraham	Abraham
16	7:17	For He testifies,	martureitai gar oti	He	God	You (our Lord)	Jesus
17	7:21	but He with an oath by Him who said to Him,	ol de; meta; orkwmosia- dia; tou legonto- pro;- aujton	He	God	You (Jesus)	Jesus

No	Ref	IF	Greek	Who speaks	Identified as	To whom	About whom/what
18	8:5	as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said,	kaqw-kecrhmatistai Mwush- mel lwn epitelein thn skhnhn, Ora gar fhsin	He	God	Moses	tabernacle
19	8:8	Because finding fault with them, He says,	memfomeno- gar auptou;- legei	He	God	unknown	them
20	9:20	sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying	kai; ußswpou aupto te to; bibli on kai; panta ton laon eprantisen legwn, (Touto)	he	Moses	all the people	blood of the covenant
21	10:5	Therefore, when He came into the world, He says,	di; eijsercomeno- eij- ton kosmon legei	He	Jesus	God	you (God) and me (Jesus)
22	10:8	Previously saying,	ajwteron legwn oft i	He	Jesus	God	you (God)
23	10:9	Then he said	toite eijhken	He	Jesus	God	I (Jesus) and your (God)
24	10:15	But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,	marturei de; hmin kai; to; pneuma to; agion: meta; gar to; eijrhkenai	Holy Spirit	Holy Spirit	us	
25	10:30a	For we know Him who said,	oifdamen gar ton eiponta	He	God (the Lord)	unknown	judgement
26	10:36	so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:	iha to; qelhma tou qeou poihsante- komishsqe thn epaggelian	not specified	God	you (readers)	the one coming, and the just man
27	11:18	of whom it was said,	pro;- of eijal hqh oft i	not specified	God	Abraham	Isaac
28	12:5	and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons,	kai; eklel hsy e th- parakl hsew-, hti- umin w- uibi- dialegetai	not specified	God	you (sons)	the discipline of God
29	12:21	And so terrifying was the sight, that Moses said,	kaivouftw foberon hn to; fantazomenon, Mwush- eipen	Moses	Moses	unknown	Moses' fear
30	12:26	And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying,	ouj hi fwnh; thn ghn eßal eusen toite, nun de; ephggel tai legwn	He	God	unknown	shake the earth and heaven
31	13:5	for He Himself has said,	aupto;- gar eijhken	He	God	you (readers)	God's ever-presence
32	13:6	so that we boldly say,	wste qarrounta- hma- legein	we	writer and reader	unknown	The Lord, our helper

Initially, it is clear that the vast majority of the subjects are in fact the pronoun "he." This constitutes 22 of the 32 instances above. This is the writer's preferred method of addressing his subjects, both divine and human (although there is only one human subject referred to as 'he' in 9:20).

Secondly, it is noted that 'he' refers to God the Father as the speaker (21 times or 66 percent), to Jesus Christ, the Son (4 times or 13 percent) and as the Holy Spirit (3 times or 9 percent) accounting for 28 of the 32 cases listed and the last four to human beings, specifically an unstipulated Old Testament prophet (2:6), twice to Moses (9:20 and 12:21) and lastly to "we" the writer and readers in 13:6.

Lane's (1991:cxvii) findings are comparable. Lane finds from the context that God the Father is the subject in twenty of the thirty-five quotations (1:5a, 5b, 6, 7, 8-9, 10-12, 13; 4:4; 5:5, 6; 6:14; 7:17, 21; 8:5, 8-12; 10:30a, 30b, 37-38; 12:26; 13:5), the Son has four quotations attributed to Him (2:12,13a, 13b; 10:5-7) and five are attributed to the Holy Spirit (3:7b-11; 4:3, 5, 7; 10:16-17). The differences are noted as arising from his list of 35 quotations in Hebrews which is a list of the quotations themselves and not the introductory formulae. But these cannot be conclusive and are "'soft' rather than firm" (1991:cxvii) as the writer of Hebrews attributes the same quotations to both Father and Holy Spirit (e.g., 8:8-12; 10:15-17) while in other places it is nearly impossible to determine whether the speaker is God or the Holy Spirit (e.g. 4:3-5,7).

#### 2.3.4.2. Trinitarian Understanding

Clearly, the writer has a decidedly Trinitarian understanding of God in that he puts the words of the Old Testament in the mouth of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – all the members of the Trinity speak the words of the OT. Bruce (1964:xliv-l) states "to our author the Old Testament is a divine oracle from first to last." These include the words of Moses (Dt 32:43 cited in Heb 1:6), the writing of the psalmists regarding angels (Ps 104:4 cited in Heb 1:7), concerning a royal bridegroom (Ps 45:6 cited in Heb 1:8), or even those words addressed to God Himself (Ps 102:25-27 cited in Heb 1:10-12).

While many New Testament writers recognise the Father speaks the words recorded in the Old Testament, there are decidedly few who attribute the words of the Old Testament to Christ such that the words of the Old Testament are that which He says rather than that which Christ quotes from the Old Testament. Only Luke of all

the New Testament writers and only on one occasion, attribute any of the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit (Ac 4:25).

#### 2.3.4.3. Human Authors

We notice however that there are others who speak besides the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The words of Moses are recorded twice (9:20, 12:21). The voice of a curious unidentified “someone” who testified “somewhere” is also heard. Lastly, the Old Testament is also a book which contains our response to God. It is that which we can “boldly say” (13:6). Not only are the words of the Old Testament prophets recorded, but those which we can recite alongside of them. Barth (1962:59) indicates that there is no difference in the handling of the text with regards to authority. Thus, “what someone says somewhere” (2:6) is no less important and binding than what “his voice” says “today” (3:7).

#### 2.3.4.4. Identity of the Author of Hebrews

But perhaps the “He” or truer to the Greek, the third person, singular ending on the verb, is used specifically by the writer to downplay the identity of the speaker purposefully. Barth (1962:59) adds a further observation;

Since it is sometimes God, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Spirit, sometimes a known or unknown, sometimes individual or collective speaker who is cited, it is not the authority of the speaker’s person or rank alone but as much the importance of what is said that makes the passage worthy of quotation.

Thus, regardless of whether the “He” is identified as the Father, Son or Holy Spirit, Moses or even an unknown speaker whose words are recorded somewhere, that which is written is that which God says to us today.

#### 2.3.4.5. Two Conversation Processes Present

We see that there are two ‘conversion processes’ going on. Firstly, the Old Testament quotation is lifted from its historical setting and reapplied in the author’s ‘today’ in the present tense (as is clearly seen in the author’s preference for the present tense to introduce an OT quotation) and secondly, regardless of who speaks in the past, prophet or patriarch, it is God’s words. That is to say that for the writer, it does not become God’s words but is God’s words in the mouth of the Old Testament prophets, recorded for us today.

For the author of Hebrews, there is no distinction; God spoke in times past through the prophets, he has spoken again through His son. It is always God speaking. There are not different voices but one ‘Voice.’ And considering even this statement, it still falls short, for God has not spoken in an historic sense but always into the present to the living generation.

Rephrasing this then; God speaks in times past though the prophets and he speaks again through His Son. It is always God speaking for the benefit of the present generation.

#### 2.3.4.6. To Whom the Speaker Speaks

Of interest is to whom God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) spoke. Firstly we observe that the Father speaks to the Son (1:5a, 8, 13, 5:5, 6; 7:17, 21) and the Son to the Father (2:11-12; 10:5-9). We, the reader or rather the hearer, are ushered into the very presence of God Himself and allowed to listen in on conversations between the Father and Son as the Father discusses the place of the Son in relation to the angels (1:5, 1:6?, 1:8, 1:13), as the Father discusses the angels perhaps even with the Son (1:7). We hear the Father discuss the Son’s role as priest with Christ (5:5, 6) and his appointment as priest (7:17) even with an oath (7:21). We listen in as the Son speaks to the Father, and declares to the Father the praise he will give God in the presence of those who are “being sanctified” and named as brothers (2:11-12) because of Christ’s priestly role. We hear Christ’s acceptance of this appointment and willingness to do

God's will (10:5-9). Barth states that the role of the 'listener' of the Old Testament is that of someone who eavesdrops on a "dialogue between God and Son" (1962:62).

But then God goes public, as it were, and that which we previously permitted to overhear is made known directly to us (Barth 1962:62). God addresses us as the implications of these things are spelt out for us to understand. First it is the voice of the Holy Spirit that we hear telling us to listen and not to harden our hearts (3:7,15), then God speaks to us through David about the same matter (4:7). Even as God spoke to Abraham (6:13) and then to Moses (8:5) and Moses in turn spoke to the people (9:20) about what God had said, so we are to listen to the witness of the Spirit who speaks God's words to us (10:15) for we know Him as a God of judgment (10:30) and of reward (10:36). So God encourages us and addresses us as sons (12:5) with a voice we cannot endure and before whom Moses was greatly afraid (12:21), whose voice shakes heaven and earth (12:26) but who Himself now says that He is with us and will not leave us (13:5). All this leads the reader to utter also the words of Scripture with boldness "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Thus the reader is swept up also into conversation with God in response to who He is and what He's done.

Barth (1962:62) points our attention to the fact that there is an "innertrinitarian conversation" that goes on. But we also notice that while there is this conversation in heaven, not all persons of the Trinity are involved. We see that God and the Son do not speak to the Spirit, and neither does the Spirit speak to them, but only of God the Father (Barth 1962:62). The Holy Spirit always speaks to us. Yet the point of His conversation with us is to witness to us what He has heard; the words of God (10:15), that we should hear and obey what God says to us by His Spirit (3:7, 15). Moreover, surprisingly, in this book, Jesus only addresses the Father and not mankind. Jesus tells the Father what He will say to His brothers and what He will say to God in the presence of His brothers whom he refers to as them, for "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" but not once is the occurrence of this recorded. It seems that it is the role of the Holy Spirit to make known the words of God, both Father and Son to us.

### 2.3.5. *The Argument from Silence*

Here we note a stylistic feature used by the author of Hebrews in the IF's and that is the validity of the argument from silence. It is clear that in 1:5a after which two quotations follow and again in 1:13 that a question is being asked; *tini gar eipen pote twn aggelwn* and *pro~ tina de; twn aggelwn eiphken pote*. Both the *tini* and *tina* are interrogative pronouns. It is not the quotation itself which contains a question as is the case in 2:6 and 13:6, but in both cases the quotation are simple statements which, are posed interrogatively in the IF. In both cases the question is the same and is a remarkable one. He asks of the reader, "To which of the angels did He (God) ever say..." and then goes on to quote an Old Testament statement about the Son. Effectively, the statements are formed by the IF's into questions by the author, when they are not questions in the original passage, but are simple statements of fact.

The question in essence from both of these passages is the same; "God has not ever said this (the citation) to any other angel, has he?" The logical answer to this question and indeed he's expecting from his audience is this, "No, God has never ever said such a thing." After a moment's reflection we may give a more guarded and qualified answer, "No, God has not said this (the quotation) to any angel in all of the Holy writings, provided, of course, that we have all the Holy writings and that these contain all that was said by God to the angels." Put another way, how do we answer the question unless we have all that God has said, not only about the Son but to the angels also? We might answer that these two questions are an argument from silence and cannot be answered with any degree of certainty at all. The author of Hebrews poses this question expecting only the bold affirmation "God has never said such a thing to any angel ever" enhancing the unique position of Christ above the angels.

This is noted not only here but is evident in the flow of the argument used in this chapter which highlights the contrast between the angels and the firstborn Son. The flow takes the following form; "For to which of the angels did God ever say...? ... But when God brings the firstborn into the world, He says... and to the angels God

says... but to the Son (he says)... and to which of the angels has God ever said...?"

The author has chosen an interesting method of enquiry which reflects more about his view of Scripture and what Scripture contains than it does about the specific matter being raised although this is no doubt the concern of the author.

In effect by posing these questions in the manner he has, he states that Scripture contains all that the reader needs to know about the person of the Son and specifically His uniqueness and secondly, about the angels (with a summary statement in 1:13) and specifically the angels in relation to the Son. This is an assumed presupposition on the part of the author. If this were not the case, he could never have posed the questions as he did, expecting a confident affirmation that nowhere in Scripture and therefore it cannot be, that God has ever said to the angels anything like what He has said to the Son.

We can identify another argument from silence in 7:3 (Attridge 1989:24), and know that this was a valid method of reasoning in his day, even though for us, it is illogical and therefore invalid. That his method is valid for his day is implied as this must have been understood by his readers otherwise his line of reasoning would have been pointless. His reasoning seems to us to be that because the genealogy of Melchizedek is unmentioned in Scripture and therefore unknown, that Melchizedek is "אֲבִיתוֹ אִמֵּהוּ" (without father or mother). Again, this sounds irrational and contrived, but in his day, was understood as a legitimate method of argument.

#### 2.4. THE ORIGIN OF THE PASSAGES QUOTED IN HEBREWS

Here, our purpose is to answer the question, "Why did the author select these particular texts?" Is there something about his choice of citation which further gives clues to the hermeneutic of the author? Here, the focus shifts to the quotations used by the author and not the IF's themselves. In contrast to the IF's in Hebrews, the discussion of the quotations in Hebrews is a well worn path and a brief comment will suffice. As an introduction, it is necessary to consider the authority of the OT as the basis of the argument in the book of Hebrews.



### 2.4.1. *The Authority of the Old Testament*

#### 2.4.1.1. The Authority of an Unfixed Canon

Hays and Green (1995:223-224), in a chapter entitled *The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers* ask the basic but pivotal question, “What is the Old Testament?” They ask this question not of us but of the Christian living in the first century and in the New Testament church. They observe that “simply to refer to the Hebrew Scriptures may too easily mask an assumption that a set of “Scriptures” had become formalized by around the mid-first century CE. This is debated, even if it is possible to presume that during this period the canon of the OT was fixed *de facto*.” Nonetheless, the NT writers refer to “Scripture” which suggests that while the canon of the Old Testament may not yet have been concluded, the authority of Scripture certainly was (Hays & Green 1995:224).

We should not think then that because the Old Testament canon may not have been fixed by the time the “New Testament” writers wrote, that somehow the authority of the “Old Testament” was in question or that the passages quoted held little influence. This is far from the case as Lindars observes; “The Old Testament is treated as the Word of God so that a citation of it is regarded as conclusive proof” (1991:131). This seems to be very much the case with regards to the author of Hebrews who underpins his argument securely with Old Testament quotations in order that his argument may be understood as being clearly derived and supported from Scripture and therefore persuasive. Ellis (1988:694) summarises his findings with this comment;

What ‘is written’ i.e. of divine authority, is not the biblical text in the abstract but the text in its meaningfulness for the current situation. The introductory formulas show, in the words of B.B. Warfield, that ‘Scripture is thought of as the living voice of God speaking in all its parts directly to the reader.’

#### 2.4.1.2. The Authority of Scripture Recognised by the Audience

Naturally, the passages quoted in support of the author's argument, must have been regarded by both the author and readers as authoritative in order for his readers to "hear His (God's) voice" and not harden their hearts (3:7,15; 4:7) but instead to do "the will of God" (10:36). "For the NT writers, theological argumentation had to proceed from the OT as the basis of authority" (Hays & Green 1995:230; Lindars 1991:131; Guthrie 1981:975). Ellis (1985:200) goes on to note that "introductory formulas often underscore the divine authority of the Old Testament, not in abstract but within the proper interpretation and application of its teaching."

The citations are included not to substantiate the author's own claims but to prove that the claims were already made in the Old Testament. "The Old Testament is treated as the Word of God, so that a citation of it is regarded as conclusive proof" (Lindars 1991:131). This is an important point, especially with respect to answering the concern that the author misused Scripture, and reinterpreted it to meet the needs of the present context.

Naturally, this is both the conviction of the author and recipients of this "word of exhortation" (13:22). "Hebrews needs to invoke Scripture at every stage of his argument. This is because nothing else will satisfy the actual situation in which he writes. Hebrews shares with his readers the conviction that the Scriptures, especially the Law and the Prophets and Psalms, have absolute authority as the revelation of the will of God" (Lindars 1991:131). This is the case to the degree that "the readers will not be persuaded to accept his argument unless it can be proved from Scripture" (Lindars 1991:131). Guthrie (1983:39) and Nicole (1994:14-17) note that the author of Hebrews unquestionably regarded the Old Testament text as authoritative. Indeed the relationship between the authoritative text of the Old Testament and the correct understanding of the purpose and unfolding of the argument are crucial (Guthrie 1983:39).

Thus the NT writers and readers already regarded the books quoted not only as Scripture and the sacred writings of Israel, but as the Word of God Himself. To what

else could the writer be referring when he describes the word of God in 4:12 as “zwn... kai; epergh; kai; tomwtero~ upep pasan macairan distomon kai diiknoumeno~ acri merismou yuch; kai; pneumato~, armw n te kai; muelwn, kai; kritiko~ equmhsewn kai; ennoiwn kardia~” (living...and active and sharper beyond any double-edged sword and passing through as far as division of soul and of spirit, both of joints and of marrows, and able to judge thoughts and intentions of a heart)? How could he warn his readers “be careful that you do not disregard the one who is speaking” (12:25a) if this were not clearly recognised as God Himself rather than the “one who is speaking” understood as the human writer?

#### 2.4.2. *The Sources of the Quotations*

Our purpose here is to establish a list of Old Testament books quoted and to seek to explain the author’s choice of these books in order to determine if the author had a particular methodology e.g. if a group of books had a greater authority and therefore is quoted more often. The data from Table 1 has been utilised to produce the following figures showing where the writer quotes from with respect to the Hebrew three fold division of the Old Testament and the actual books quoted.

Figure 4 - Three fold division of Scriptures quoted in Hebrews

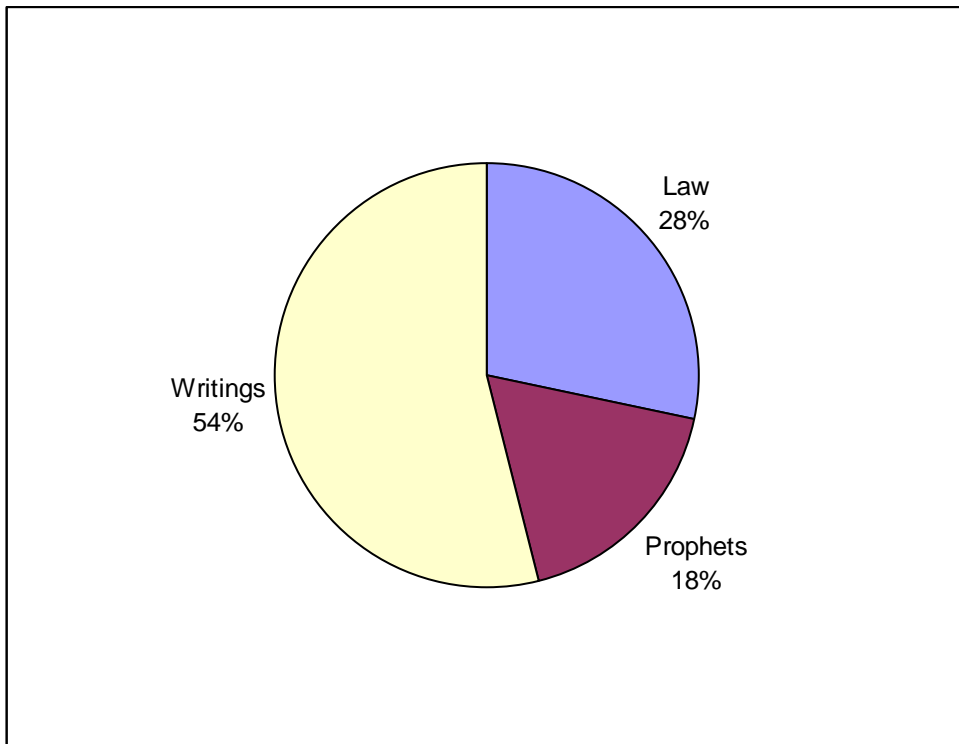
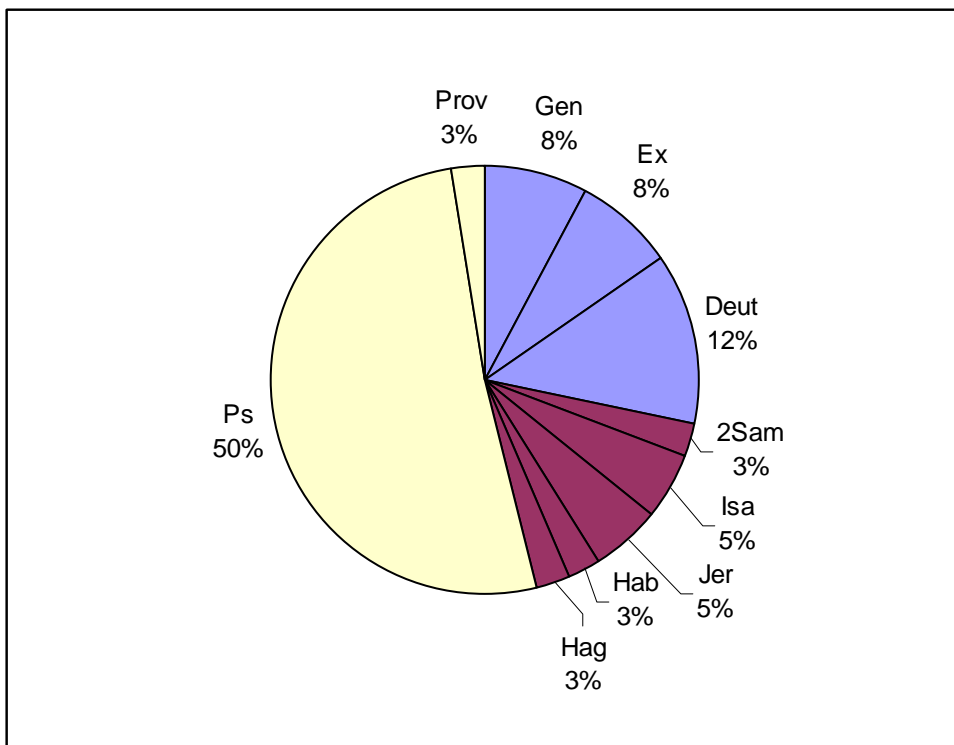


Figure 5 - Old Testament books quoted in Hebrews



From the figures above, it is clear that the primary origin of the quotations is taken from the writings and specifically from Psalms (20 of the 39 quotations listed). A further 11 quotations are from the Pentateuch or books of the Law (the Hebrew Torah). The remaining 7 quotations are sourced from the Prophets.

Guthrie (1983:39) notes that Psalm 110 plays a key role in the author's development of his argument sourcing his Melchizedek theme from here and secondly, that Jeremiah 31 is pivotal in supplying his new covenant understanding. Lane (1991:cxvi) demonstrates that the text of the Pentateuch is interpreted through the writings of the Psalms and indeed that the Psalms are the primary sources for developing the writer's Christology. Even the character of Melchizedek in Gn 14:17-20 is interpreted through the interpretation of Psalm 110:4. Caird (1959:44-51) proposed that the writing of Hebrews is structured around four key Old Testament passages; Psalm 110:1-4; Psalm 8:4-6; Psalm 95:7-11 and Jeremiah 31:31-34. Caird states that the reason for this is that the primary thrust of these passages is the ineffectiveness, symbolic and provisional nature of the religious institutions (Caird 1959:47; Lane 1991:cxiii).

The author of Hebrews theology and indeed Christology is formulated exclusively from the Psalms (Longenecker 1975:167). For the writer of Hebrews, it was not the Law, nor even the Prophets, but the Writings which were the primary source of the authoritative instruction to his hearers. In the case of the Law, the writer has stated that, "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb 7:19) and is "but a shadow" (Heb 10:1) and perhaps does not rely as heavily upon it for that reason. He draws even less upon the Prophets, possibly in light of his opening statement in 1:1 and so the majority of the passages are cited from the Writings.

## 2.5. THE USE OF INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We have observed the method of the writer of Hebrews in introducing the quotations in the Old Testament, but how different is his method compared to that of the other NT writers?

According to Goppelt (1981:243), it is very different. He states that Hebrews “quoted the Old Testament throughout with a quotation formula that was not customary in the New Testament: ‘God [or Christ or the Holy Spirit] said.’” As a footnote, he qualifies this with, “Also on occasion elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g. Rm 9:15, 25) reference was made to a word of God in the Old Testament, but as quotation formula these expressions were peculiar to the Epistle to the Hebrews” (1981:243). Was the writer of Hebrews introducing his selected quotations in a manner different to the other writers of the New Testament? We will see that Goppelt’s findings are not entirely accurate although there is some truth in them.

### 2.5.1. *The Number of Quotations and Introductory Formulae per New Testament Book*

Snodgrass (1994:35) observes that of the 401 instances mentioned in the United Bible Society’s *The Greek New Testament* only 195 “have some type of accompanying formula such as “it is written” to inform the reader that a Scripture text is being cited.” Nicole (1994:13), counting quotations alone, totals “unquestionably 295 separate references” which form 4.4 percent of the New Testament or one quotation in every 22.5 verses. Naturally when allusions are included this figure increases dramatically such that Nicole (1994:14) can assert, “without exaggeration, that more than 10 percent of the New Testament text is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament.” Specific books, like Matthew, Hebrews, Romans and Revelation are inundated with Old Testament echoes, allusion and quotations such that their percentage is yet higher. Shires (1974:15) states that of the twenty seven New Testament books only Philemon “shows no direct relationship to the O.T.” while the remaining books contain either a direct quotation or a rephrased quotation

or an allusion. Indeed if all the Old Testament influences were removed, the New Testament would consist merely of pieces without meaning.

Snodgrass (1994:35) gives statistics of the number of quotations having some introductory formula from the first edition of the UBS text as in the following table;

**Table 6 - New Testament quotations and Introductory Formulae per book**

<b>New Testament Book</b>	<b>No of quotations</b>	<b>No of IF's</b>
Matthew	62	32
Mark	30	11
Luke	39	15
John	18	14
Acts	37	23
Romans	54	40
1Corinthians	16	10
2Corinthians	12	5
Galatians	11	5
Ephesians	10	1
Philippians	1	0
Colossians	0	
1Thessalonians	1	0
2Thessalonians	4	0

<b>New Testament Book</b>	<b>No of quotations</b>	<b>No of IF's</b>
1Timothy	2	1
2Timothy	1	0
Titus	0	
Philemon	0	
Hebrews	59	30
James	6	4
1Peter	15	3
2Peter	2	0
1John	0	
2John	0	
3John	0	
Jude	1	1
Revelation	20	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>195</b>

Using the information above, and taking account the number of words in each New Testament book, much can be derived in order to get an overview of how quotations and IF's are related per book and this with respect to the size of the book. The number of words per book is derived by counting the number of Greek words in the 1991 Byzantine Majority text form.

**Table 7 – New Testament quotations, Introductory Formulae, book size and the relationship between them**

<b>New Testament Book</b>	<b>No of quotations</b>	<b>No of IF's</b>	<b>IF's to quotations (%)</b>	<b>No of words in Byzantine Greek text</b>	<b>Size of book to rest of NT (%)</b>	<b>No of quotations / size of book (%)</b>	<b>No of IF's / size of book (%)</b>
Matthew	62	32	52	18745	13.37	0.331	0.171
Mark	30	11	37	11618	8.29	0.258	0.095
Luke	39	15	38	19878	14.18	0.196	0.075
John	18	14	78	15893	11.34	0.113	0.088
Acts	37	23	62	18672	13.32	0.198	0.123
Romans	54	40	74	7210	5.14	0.749	0.555
1Corinthians	16	10	63	6927	4.94	0.231	0.144
2Corinthians	12	5	42	4510	3.22	0.266	0.111
Galatians	11	5	45	2252	1.61	0.488	0.222
Ephesians	10	1	10	2459	1.75	0.407	0.041
Philippians	1	0	0	1641	1.17	0.061	
Colossians	0			1614	1.15		
1Thessalonians	1	0	0	1497	1.07	0.067	
2Thessalonians	4	0	0	833	0.59	0.480	
1Timothy	2	1	50	1621	1.16	0.123	0.062
2Timothy	1	0	0	1251	0.89	0.080	
Titus	0			664	0.47		
Philemon	0			340	0.24		
Hebrews	59	30	51	4987	3.56	1.183	0.602
James	6	4	67	1760	1.26	0.341	0.227
1Peter	15	3	20	1719	1.23	0.873	0.175
2Peter	2	0	0	1103	0.79	0.181	
1John	0			2151	1.53		
2John	0			249	0.18		
3John	0			217	0.15		
Jude	1	1	100	450	0.32	0.222	0.222
Revelation	20	0	0	9898	7.06	0.202	
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>140159</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0.336</b>	<b>0.194</b>
						(averaged)	(averaged)

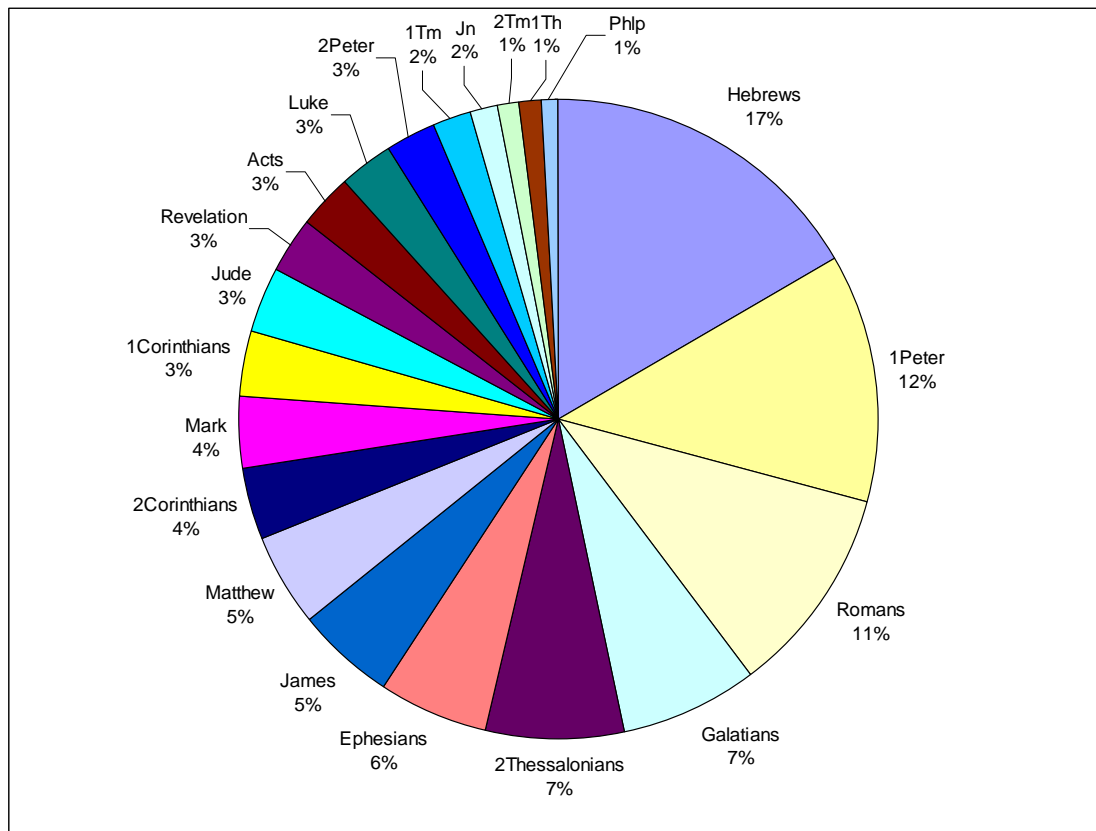
Initially it is important to observe that some of the New Testament books do not contain a quotation from the Old Testament at all. Of the 27 New Testament books, we see that 6 have no quotations at all, and 4 books have only one. From the table above, 12 books have two quotations or less, but this should not be surprising recalling the purpose and size of some of the books.



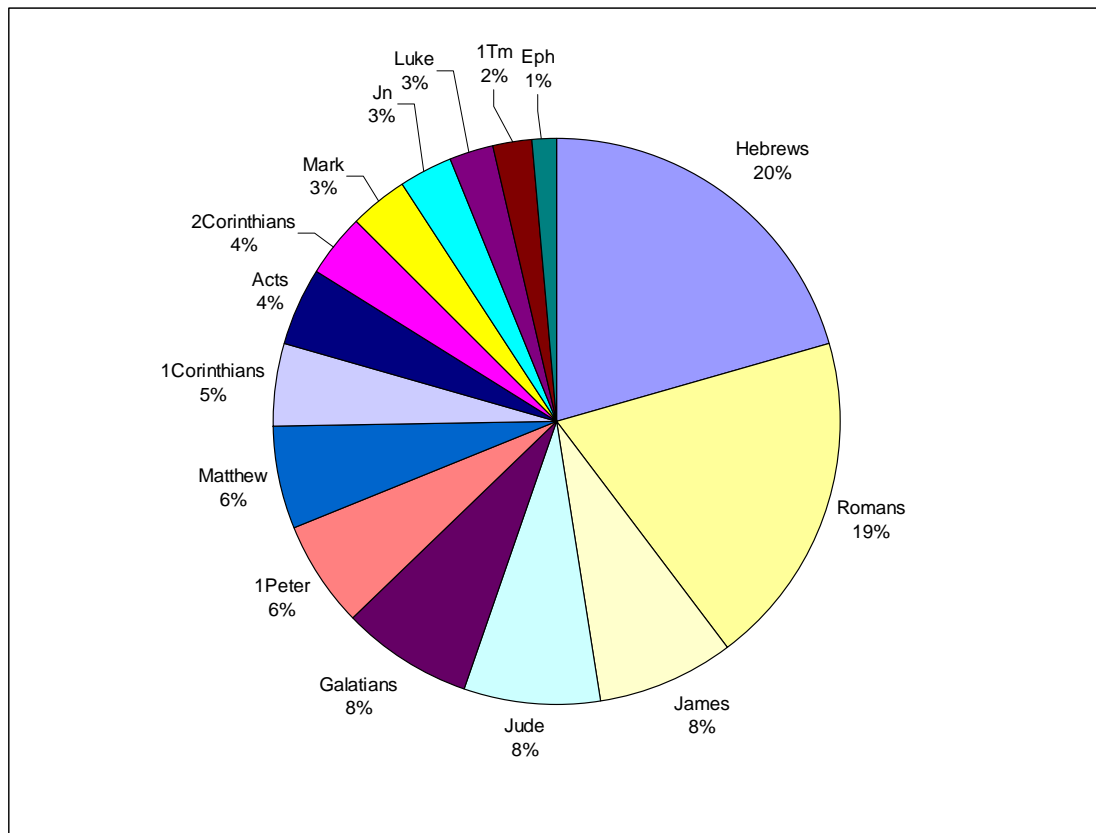
We notice that the books of Matthew, Hebrews and Romans have the most number of Old Testament quotations accounting for 44 percent of the New Testament quotations. Secondly, we notice that these same books also have the most number of IF's, although not in the same order, but accounting for 52 percent of the New Testament IF's. A striking observation however, is that when it comes to ordering the books according to the number of IF's per quotation, Hebrews falls into only 8<sup>th</sup> position after Jude (which is an exceptional case as it has only one quotation and one IF), John, Romans, James, 1 Corinthians, Acts and Matthew. This means that the writer of Hebrews is far less inclined to introduce an Old Testament quotation with a comment than is the case for many of the other books of the New Testament.

However, the picture changes dramatically if the size of the book is taken into consideration. We notice firstly that Hebrews consists of only 3,56 percent of the words in the New Testament and is the ninth largest book after Luke, Matthew, Acts, John, Mark, Revelation, Romans, and 1 Corinthians respectively and followed closely by 2 Corinthians. These ten books account for almost 85 percent of the text of the New Testament. With respect to its size, however, Hebrews far outstrips the other books in the number of quotations used, leading by over 35 percent to the next highest being 1Peter, and accounting for 17 percent of the New Testament. This is evident in the next figure.

Figure 6 - Number of quotations per size of book



Not only does Hebrews lead in the number of quotations used when the size of the book is taken into account, but Hebrews also leads in the number of IF's in the books of the New Testament, again taking the size of the books into account. This is established in the next figure.

**Figure 7 - Number of Introductory Formulae per size of book**

Thus, taking into consideration the length of the book, Hebrews employs more quotations and more IF's than any other New Testament writer.

### 2.5.2. *The Other New Testament Writers' Methods of Citation*

In the following analysis, I have focussed on the IF's that appear throughout the New Testament. For instance, much can be said about Paul's understanding of the law and his perception of the nature of it, but these matters have been set aside where they do not fall into the IF's themselves. I have loosely grouped the IF's of the other New Testament writers into categories according to the common Greek words, both verbs and nouns, employed (see table 8 below). My concern here has not been so much a close examination of tenses of verbs but rather a loose association regardless of tense, and with similar words grouped together (like  $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega$  and  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\iota$  and  $\pi\lambda\epsilon\omega\rho\eta\theta\eta$  and  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$ ). This explains the use of the wild card characters under column 1.

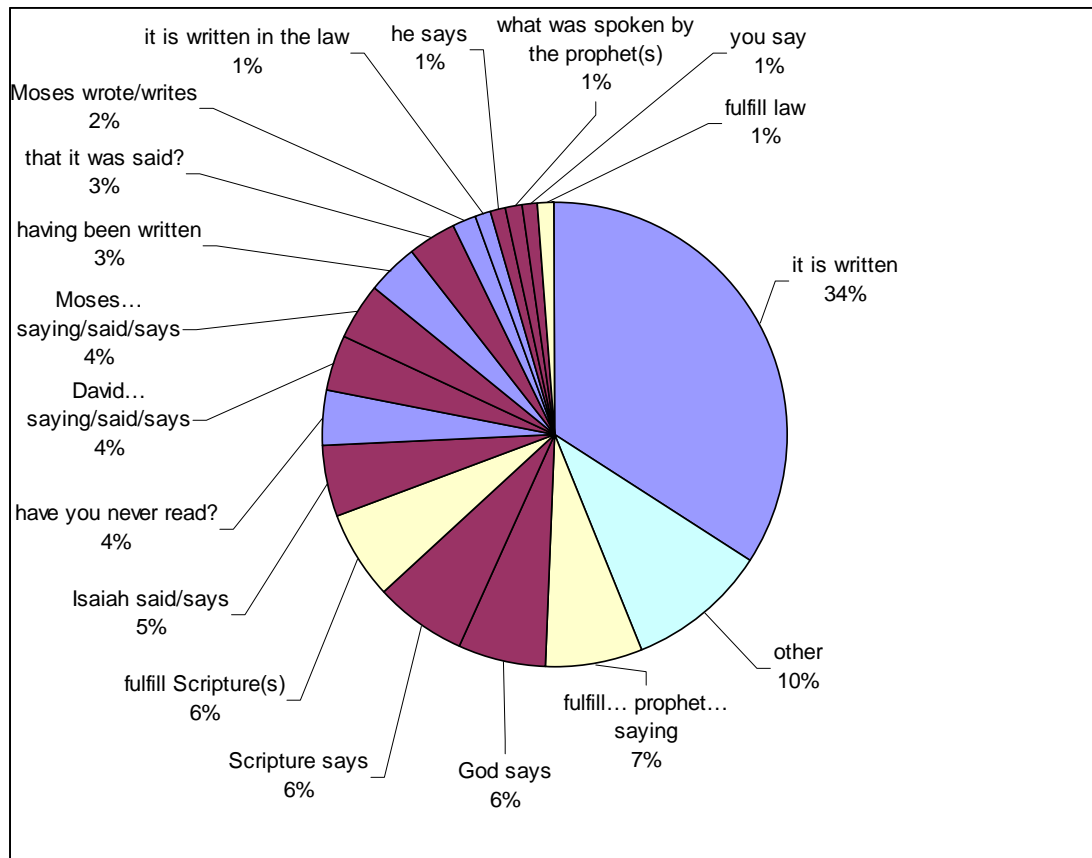
**Table 8 – Words and phrases in the Introductory Formulae in the New Testament  
excluding Hebrews**

<u>Greek word or phrase</u>	<u>English word or phrase</u>	<u>Occurrences</u>	<u>Passages</u>
gegraptai	it is written	61	Mt 2:5; 4:4,6,7,10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:31; Mk 1:2; 7:6; 9:12,13; 11:17; 14:27; Lk 2:23; 3:4; 4:4,8,10; 7:27; 19:46; 24:46; Jn 8:17; 20:31; Ac 1:20; 7:42; 13:33; 15:15; 23:5; Ro 1:17; 2:24; 3:4,10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13,33; 10:15; 11:8,26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3,9,21
*pl hr* AND profht* AND leg* OR eipen	fulfil AND prophet AND saying	12	Mt 1:22, 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 27:9; Jn 12:38
*pl hr* OR *tele* AND graf*	fulfil Scripture(s)	11	Mt 26:56; Mk 15:28; Lk 4:21; 22:37; Jn 13:18; 19:24,28,36; Ac 1:16; Ja 2:8,23
qeo;- AND leg* OR eipen	God says	11	Mt 15:4; Mk 12:26; Ac 2:17; 3:25; 4:25; 7:6,7; 13:22,34,35; 2 Cor 6:16
grafh; AND legousa OR legei	Scripture says	11	Mk 15:28; Jn 19:24,37; Rm 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gl 4:30; 1 Tm 5:18; Ja 2:23; 4:5
#hsai* AND leg* OR eipen	Isaiah said OR says	9	Mt 3:3; 15:7; Jn 1:23; 12:39,41; Ac 28:25; Rm 10:16, 20; 15:12
Dauid AND leg* OR eip*	David AND saying OR said OR says	7	Mt 22:43; Lk 12:36; Lk 20:42; Ac 2:25, 34; Rm 4:6; 11:9
ouk OR oupe; OR oupote ajegnwte	have you never read?	7	Mt 19:4; 21:16,42; 22:31; Mk 2:25; 12:10,26
Mwush'- AND leg* OR eip*	Moses AND saying OR said OR says	7	Mt 22:24; Mk 7:10; Lk 20:37; Ac 3:22; 7:37; Rm 9:15; 10:19
gegrammeno*	having been written	6	Lk 20:17; Jn 2:17; 6:31; 12:14; 1 Cor 15:54; 2 Cor 4:13
oti ejreqh	that it was said?	6	Mt 5:21,27,31,33,38,43
Mwush'- egrayen OR graftei	Moses wrote OR writes	3	Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28; Rm 10:5
*pl hr* OR *tele* AND nomo*	fulfil law	2	Gl 5:14; Ja 2:8
legei	he says	2	2 Cor 6:2; Ja 4:6
gegrammen* ej twõ nomwõ	it is written in the law	2	Jn 10:34; 15:25
eijhmenon AND profht*	what was spoken by the prophet(s)	2	Ac 2:16; 13:40
ew- eiphte	you say	2	Mt 23:39; Lk 13:35
kata; to; eijhmenon	according to what was spoken	1	Rm 4:18
w- ej iWshe; legei	as He says in Isaiah	1	Rm 9:25
kaqw;- proeirhken #hsaiã-	as Isaiah said before	1	Rm 9:29
profht*- legei	as the prophet says	1	Ac 7:48
periecei ej grafhõ	contained in Scripture	1	1 Pt 2:6
ejwn thn sfragida tauthn	having this seal	1	2 Tm 2:19

<u>Greek word or phrase</u>	<u>English word or phrase</u>	<u>Occurrences</u>	<u>Passages</u>
#hsaiã~ AND krazei	Isaiah cries out	1	Rm 9:27
oñti eiñhtai	it has been said	1	Lk 4:12
gegrammeno* eñ toi~ profhtai~	it is written in the prophets	1	Jn 6:45
dikaïosunh AND legei	righteousness speaks	1	Rm 10:6
grafh; AND prouhggel isato	Scripture preached	1	Gl 3:8
ouñtw~ gar eñtetai tai hmih ol kurio~	so the Lord has commanded us	1	Ac 13:47
crhmatismo~ AND legei	the divine response says	1	Rm 11:4
eñpaggel ia~ gar ol logo~ ouñto~	this is the word of promise	1	Rm 9:9
eijñhmenon AND nomwó	this is what was spoken in the law	1	Lk 2:24
ajñ hqou~ paroimia~	true proverb	1	2 Pt 2:22
legomen	we say	1	Rm 4:9

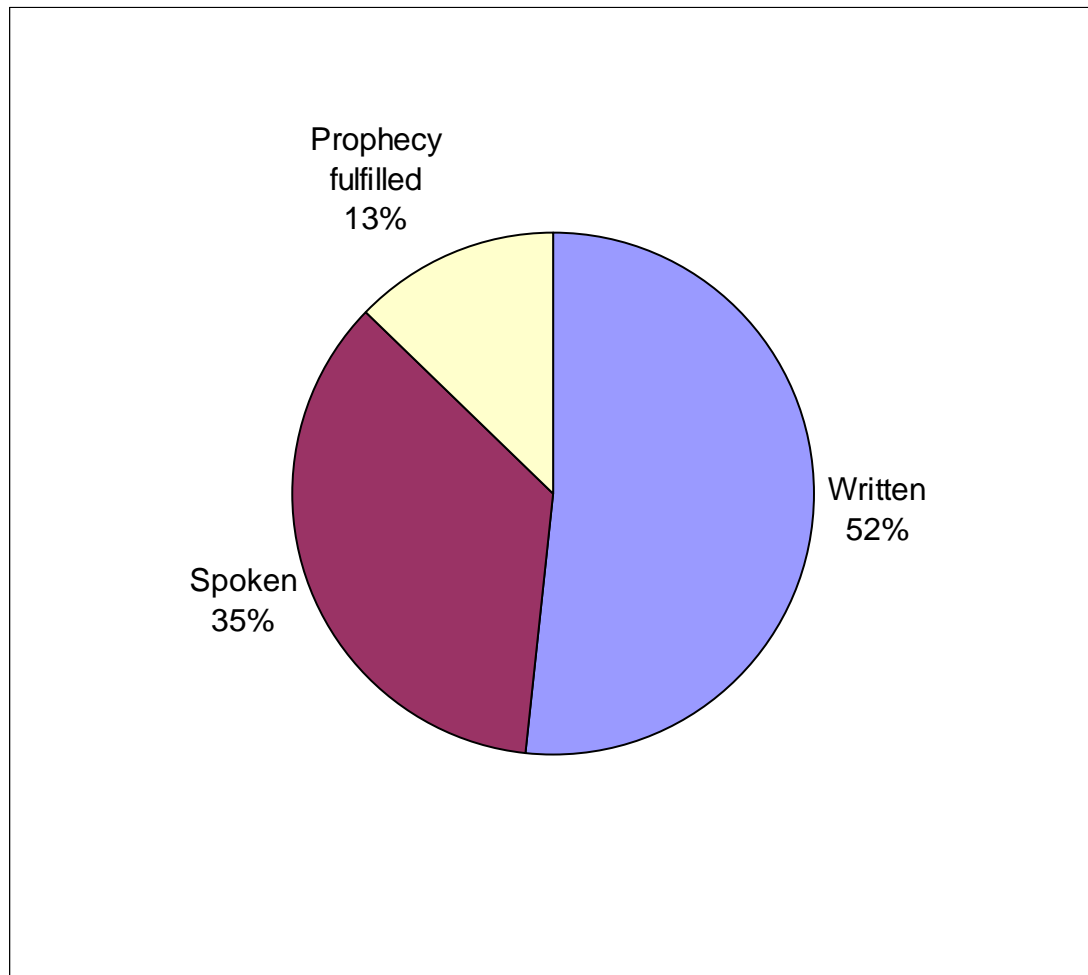
In Figure 8 below, the findings above are analysed. For the sake of readability, only phrases which have two or many instances are included. The unique phrases are grouped under 'other' in order to see visually what percentage they comprise.

**Figure 8 - Popular Introductory Formulae words and phrases in the New Testament excluding Hebrews**



From these popular IF's, three overarching categories have surfaced in the New Testament writers' method of citation; the written nature of Scripture, the spoken nature of Scripture, the 'prophecy fulfilled' emphasis. These are analysed below.

**Figure 9 - Three fold categorisation of the use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers excluding Hebrews**



#### 2.5.2.1. The Written Nature of Scripture

By far the most common word employed in any IF is the word *gegraptai*, “it is written.” It is used in various forms with other Greek keywords but most commonly on its own (Mt 4:4, 6, 7, 10, 21:13; 26:13; Mk 14:27; Lk 4:4, 8, 10; 19:46; 24:46; Ac 23:5; Rm 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19; 10:7; 15:45; 2 Cor 8:15; 9:9; Gl 3:10, 13; 4:27; 1 Pt 1:16). These instances of the usage of *gegraptai* all demonstrate a confident assertion by the writer of a factual proof of his point and is followed closely by a quotation and therefore serve as a convenient IF indicator, although not in every case e.g. Jn 20:31.

The verb is occasionally phrased as a question; *ouj gegraptai*, “is it not written?” (Mk 11:17) and “is it not written in your law?” (Jn 10:34).

The word *gegraptai* appears frequently in conjunction with the nouns ‘law,’ ‘the prophets’ and ‘writings,’ which is the three fold division of the Jewish Old Testament. This is translated as follows often serving as an indication of where the citations are derived from although the passages derived from the law indicate that this reference is wider than the Pentateuch.

Passages quoted from the law are introduced in this way; “as it is written in the law of the Lord” (Lk 2:23), “in the law it is written” (1 Cor 14:21 quoted from Isaiah), “it is written in your law” (Jn 8:17), “it is written in their Law” (Jn 15:25 quoted from the Psalms) “Moses wrote” (Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28) or “Moses writes” (Rm 10:5) and “the law of Moses” (1 Cor 9:9).

Passages introduced with reference to the prophets include; “it is written in the book of the prophets” (Ac 7:42), “it is written by the prophet” (Mt 2:5), it is “written in the prophets” (Jn 6:45; Ac 24:14) and “with these words the prophets agree, as it is written” (Ac 15:15). On occasion the prophet is identified, either as Isaiah (Mk 1:2, 7:6; Lk 3:4), or generally as the Psalms, “it is written in the book of Psalms” (Ac 1:20), and “in the second Psalm” (Ac 13:33).

Other references to that which is written include, “it is contained in the Scripture” (1 Pt 2:6) and “God’s solid foundation stands” (2 Tm 2:19). The Scripture, that which is written, was recorded in order to be read and understood, yet Jesus often posed the question, “have you not read” (Mt 19:4, 21:16, 42, 22:31; Mk 2:25, 12:10, 26). Notwithstanding, that which is written is that which “the Lord has commanded” (Ac 13:47) and is for the children of the promise, the “word of promise” (Rm 9:9).

Other uses of the verb *gegraptai* pertain to the fulfilment of that which is written with respect to the person of Christ, such that Matthew and Luke can state with confidence “this is he of whom it is written” (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:27).



The word *gegraptai*, which is a perfect passive indicative verb, “it is written,” also appears as a perfect passive participle, *gegrammenon*, “having been written,” both of which indicate by the passive voice that the results of the action are still felt in the present. Between these two forms there is very little difference, and are both typically translated as “it is written.” The latter word *gegrammenon* is employed in Lk 20:17, Jn 2:17; 6:31; 12:14, 1 Cor 15:54, 2 Cor 4:13.

For Paul and the other New Testament writers, the Old Testament is that which is written and must be practised. It is the law which is to be read. It is that which is written and that which must be performed. Indeed, “it is not the hearers of the law who will be justified before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified” (Rm 2:13). Further in Romans 2, the law is an entity, it is that which is possessed (14, 20), which instructs (18), written on hearts (15), relied upon (17), kept (26) or broken (25). The Jewish understanding of the law was typically along the lines of the ten commandments written on tablets and this is understandable as the law was the written covenant between God and Israel. Contrastingly, while the law is written, it is Scripture that speaks (Rm 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gl 4:30; 1 Tm 5:18) and even preaches (Gl 3:8). [LL1]

#### 2.5.2.2. The Spoken Nature of Scripture

Not only is Scripture written, but it is that which is “spoken.” When it comes to the spoken nature of Scripture, perhaps the more pressing issue for a modern reader may well be the identity of the speaker rather than the nature of that which is spoken. We must not lose sight of the fact that the focus here is not on the speaker or author of the book but on that which is spoken and therefore the text itself.

The phrase “it was said” which appears frequently in Jesus’ sermon on the mount before a quotation (Mt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43), serves as a good starting point. He reminds the people of that which was read and spoken to them in the Law and repeatedly states before reciting Scripture, “you have heard that it was said” (Mt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). Whatever our understanding of the focus of these passages may be, Jesus’ focus is clearly not on the identity of the one who spoke these words.

While it could be contended that this had reference to the people having heard the words of law being read to them in the synagogue, such that they heard the voice of man rather than the voice of God Himself, the following uses fix the oral nature of the Scripture itself. “Scripture says,” (“*graph:...legousa*” or “*graph:...legei*” Mk 15:28; Jn 19:24,37; Rm 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gl 4:30; 1 Tm 5:18; Ja 2:23; 4:5) and “it has been said” (Lk 4:12). Contrastingly, “God says” (“*qeo~... legei*” or “*qeo~...legwn*” or “*qeo~...eipen*” Mt 15:4, 22:31; Mk 12:26; Ac 2:17; 3:25; 7:6,7; 13:22; 2 Cor 6:16) and “he says” or “it says” (Ja 4:6).

Regarding the testimony of Scripture, the New Testament writers state that “Moses says” (Mt 22:24; Mk 7:10; Lk 20:37; Ac 3:22; 7:37; Rm 9:15; 10:19), “David says” (Mt 22:43; Lk 12:36; Lk 20:42; Ac 2:25, 34; Rm 4:6; 11:9), “Isaiah says” (Mt 3:3; 15:7; Jn 1:23; 12:39,41; Ac 28:25; Rm 9:25, 29 10:16, 20; 15:12), “Isaiah cries out” (Rm 9:27), and “the prophet says” (Ac 7:48) such that Luke can refer to “what is said in the Law of the Lord” (2:24), “what was uttered through the prophet Joel” (Ac 2:16) and “what is said in the prophets” (Ac 13:40).

At times Scripture takes on a personality and not only speaks but preaches the gospel (Gl 3:8) such that Metzger can say that, “Indeed, so habitual was the identification of the divine Author with the words of Scripture that occasionally personality is attributed to the passage itself” (1951:306).

While Goppelt gives only the example in Rm 9:15 and 25 there are more; God speaks the words of Scripture, or putting it more accurately, the words of Scripture record God’s words in both the Old and New Testament; the words of God’s reply to Elijah are recorded in Rm 11:4. Jesus’ first recorded words by Matthew are the words of Scripture (Mt 4:4, 6, 10) and Jesus interprets Scripture (Mt 21:42, 22:43) to frustrate and silence his opponents (Mt 22:46).

We find a few examples of the practice of saying or repeating the words of Scripture similar to the last IF in Hebrews (13:6). Firstly, Jesus encourages his hearers to repeat “*eiphte*” the words of Scripture (Mt 23:39; Lk 13:35) which was necessary as a precursor to seeing him again. Secondly, we find another example in Rm 4:9 “for we



A similar word usage employed in the IF's above is found in Mt 13:14 which states ἀναπληρῶνται αὐτοὶ τὴν προφητείαν ἠσαίου ἢ λέγουσα, "in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says..." Another variant example is found in Jn 12:38, ὁ λόγος ἠσαίου τοῦ προφήτου πληρωθήσεται, "the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled which said..."

Three word combinations include the words 'fulfilled' (πληρωθήσεται), 'word' and 'written' and the only instance of this is found in Jn 15:25 "ἀλλ' ἵνα πληρωθῶν ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν γεγραμμένος ὅτι..." There is a single example of the word τελεῖται used in conjunction with both νόμος and γράφειν in Ja 2:8.

Of interest is the puzzling and therefore, much debated phrase regarding the phrase found in Mt 2:23 where the three words "fulfil," "word," and "prophet" are present; "And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene." This has all the makings of being a quotation and therefore a valid IF although it's reference is unknown leading to much speculation regarding the passages being fulfilled and the method of the author when there is no known canonical passage to which this refers.

Two word keywords combinations include firstly, πληρωθήσεται and γράφειν; (fulfilled and Scriptures). This is found in the following passages, Mt 26:56; Mk 15:28; Lk 4:21; Jn 13:18; 19:24, 36; Ac 1:16 and Ja 2:23. The combinations of the words τελεῖται and γράφειν also appear in various forms; as τελεῖται and γράφειν in Jn 19:28 and as τελεσθήσεται and γεγραμμένον in Lk 22:37.

The concept of fulfilling the law is explored using the terms πεπληρωμένοι and νόμος in Gl 5:14 and the terms πληρωθήσεται and νόμος in Jn 15:25.

### 2.5.3. *The Other New Testament Writers Hermeneutical Persuasion*

The conclusion of the above analysis must undoubtedly emphasize the fact that for the New Testament writers, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were that which was written, that which was spoken and that which was fulfilled.

Picking up on the prophecy fulfilled aspect of the Scripture, it is clear that for the New Testament writers, that which God had spoken was that which had been written concerned the coming Messiah. Their conviction was that God had acted to “bring to completion the whole history of God’s dealings with this people” (Hays and Green 1995:222). Jesus’ example of his use of Scripture as having reference to himself (Lk 4:18-21; 24:44; Jn 5:39) is adopted by the New Testament writers as their own. They read and reread Scripture with new insight as to the fulfilment of Scripture with reference to God’s Anointed and specifically his foreseen yet unexpected death and resurrection. This insight came later after the resurrection as they read with new eyes, understanding the principle of the locus of interpretation of the Old Testament as pertaining to Jesus the Christ. By using a Christological hermeneutic they were able to explain the events they had been witness to. For them, Jesus is the fulfilment of the law, the prophets and the writings and therefore of all Scripture (Evans 2004:145). He came to fulfil them directly (Mt 5:17) with the words of Scripture being heard on his lips (Lk 23:46). Jesus is understood to be the Messiah bringing to completion the plan of God to redeem Israel seen throughout Jewish history and in accordance with the promises of God (Ac 13:16-41; Lindars 1991:129). Indeed Israel itself is reinterpreted as including the Gentiles (Ac 15:6-29; Rm 3:29-30; Gl 3).

The Old Testament is further understood as being fulfilled typologically in Christ. Hays and Green (1995:228) observe that influence of the Old Testament elements or ‘type-scenes’ is extensive whereby a repetition of biblical narrative is noted.

While Goppelt indicated that the writer of Hebrews had penned his IF’s in a unique manner, we notice a similarity in the following phrases “David in the Spirit...saying” (Mt 22:43; Mk 12:36) are reminiscent of Heb 4:7 the difference being that in the New Testament passages David is speaking, while in Hebrews, the Spirit is speaking through David.

We see that we are to repeat the words of Scripture (Mk 23:39; Lk 13:35) and this is exemplified in shouting of Scripture on the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into

Jerusalem (Mk 11:9). This is demonstrated again in Heb 13:6 as we are to boldly affirm the truth of Scripture in repetition.

We should not think of these three formulations of the nature of Scripture as three separate and isolated IF's but rather as a 'tri-faceted' statement regarding the New Testament writers singular perception of Scripture; that which God had spoken, which had been written and which was fulfilled with the coming of His Son.

## 2.6. THE WRITINGS OF PHILO, THE NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS AND EARLY CHURCH LITERATURE

It is helpful and interesting to observe the usage of New Testament quotations against the backdrop of other writers and early church literature. Firstly, it is interesting to note that none of the writers of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings quote a single Old Testament passage although there are allusions to it (Snodgrass 1994:35). Neither are there any explicit citations by any of the New Testament writers to any of the apocryphal or pseudepigraphal books (Nicole 1994:15).

Secondly, France (1971:225) concludes his findings in this regard by observing that "apart from the book of Revelation ...there is no significant dependence on current Jewish use of the Old Testament. The school in which the writers learned to use the Old Testament was that of Jesus."

Regarding the similarity between the formulas of citation in the Mishnah and the New Testament, Metzger concludes that "the Mishnah shows a great preference for those formulas involving a verb of saying, whereas in the New Testament the frequency of this type is more evenly balanced by the type containing a reference to a written record" (1951:305).

### 2.6.1. *Philo of Alexandria*

Much has been made of the similarities and differences between the methods of interpretation of the Old Testament by the author of Hebrews and Philo (c20B.C.-50A.D.) (see Hanson 1988:292-295). Philo attempted to reconcile Greek philosophy and the Pentateuch and is therefore best described as a Jewish-Hellenistic philosopher. His concept of God reflects a being without attributes having a perfect Platonic form existing in an ideal world. A sharp distinction is noted by Lindars (1991:51) between Plato's earthly forms which correspond to the eternal ideas and stand in stark contrast to Hebrews' "partial and temporary manifestations of God's intentions."

It was Spicq (1952:39-91, 198) who, in his two volume commentary, established the concept that Hebrews echoed a philosophical dualism learned from Plato (Guthrie 2003:283). Ellingworth (1993:45) observes that Spicq (1952:39) found this thought in seed form in the writing of Hugo Grotius in 1644 who, commenting on Heb 4:11, noted that "here the author seems to have read Philo." This has been critiqued and whittled down to a mere apparition compared with Spicq's initial epic introduction. Lane writes that R. Williamson in his "meticulous study" (1991:cvii) of 1970, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, showed that Spicq's research was "flawed and that he overstated his case" (1991:cvii).

One of the clearest differences between Plato and Hebrews is their allegorical exegesis which permeates Philo, but is absent from Hebrews. Philo argued that the literal meaning was immature and that only through allegorical interpretation could the full and mature meaning of a text be reached (Sloan & Newman 2002:61). He preferred allegory to a literal interpretation especially when the text presented God anthropomorphically e.g. "The Lord went down" (Gn 11:15), or when the text presented an unexplained difficulty e.g. "If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gn 4:15), or when the text presented a seeming contradiction (Sloane & Newman 2002:61-62).

Hanson notes, nonetheless, that “as far as exegesis of Scripture is concerned Philo and our author have very little in common...the two writers differ very widely indeed” (1988:294). Their method is different; Philo is clearly allegorical, while Hebrews interprets literally even when it comes to interpreting the story of Melchizedek (Lindars 1991:24).

Moreover, Ellingworth (1993:47) makes a case for the likely impossibility of Hebrews being able to quote Philo as the dates of writing are too near yet near enough to share a number of common literary and stylistic features. It seems unlikely that there is any cross pollination therefore between Philo and the author of Hebrews and the initial theory by Spicq has been laid to rest (Lindars 1991:23).

#### 2.6.2. *Mishnah*

Metzger’s (1951:297-307) comparison of the IF’s of the New Testament and the Mishnah is unique and extremely helpful. He notes that the majority of the IF’s in the Mishnah employ the Hebrew verb אָמַר (‘say’) while the New Testament is more balanced in its use of the reference to a written source. It is interesting to note that the indefinite Old Testament source expression “somewhere,” which appear only in Hebrews in the New Testament (2:6 and 4:4) also appear in the Mishnah (Nazir 9:5 and Sotah 6:3) and similarly, the unnamed passage in Heb 5:6 finds a number of comparative passages from the Mishnah (Sotah 5:3; Abodah Zarah 2:5; Sotah 5:1; Bikkurim 4:2; Qiddushin 1:7 and Bikkurim 3:6).

Metzger (1951:305-306) lists a number of similarities in the IF’s between the two; the use of the verb of saying, the high view of Scripture as that which is inspired having subjects as both God and Scripture and at the same time, the recognition of human authors as the instruments by which the Scriptures came into being. There are also sharp differences between the two; the absence of the IF ‘Talmud says’ in the New Testament and the absence of the words *plhrouh*, *ajhaplhrouh*, and *teleiouh* in the Mishnah which clearly indicates the different perspectives of the outworking of salvation history. These words are particularly evident in Matthew and Mark, but do not appear in Hebrews at all except for the last word which never speaks about the



fulfilment by Christ of Scripture but rather His perfection (2:10; 5:9; 12:2) contrasted with the imperfection of the law (7:11; 9:9; 10:1), leading to our perfection and maturity (5:14; 6:1; 11:40).

Thus, while it seems as if the writer of Hebrews introduced his quotations in a manner that was common with the Hebrew practice of his day using much of the terminology employed in the Mishnah, there are distinct dissimilarities. Firstly that of a different understanding of what Scripture is as the spoken Word of God and secondly of whom it spoke, leading to a markedly Christological interpretation of the Old Testament.

### 2.6.3. *Qumran*

Hughes observes that “The Qumranites...come nearer to the historical and exegetical perspectives of the letter to the Hebrews than any other non-Christian group” (1979:65). Hughes’ reason for this statement may be the fact that the personages of the character of Melchizedek and the priestly Messiah are but two aspects found in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Hebrews. Yet, while there are significant similarities, again, there are substantial differences between what is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls regarding the Qumran Sect and what is evident in the New Testament use of Scripture. Primary among them is that in the Qumran documents, the Old Testament text has a hidden meaning which must be interpreted and made clear in light of a particular event in the historical context of the author, while for the authors of the New Testament the locus of interpretation is the person of Christ (Marshall 1994:209-210). This difference in interpretation is especially evident in the example of Hab 2:3-4 quoted in Heb 10:37-38 and in 1QHab. Hebrews, following the LXX, interprets the phrase in Hab 2:3, “it hastens to the end—it will not lie” as “*o<sub>l</sub> ej<sub>r</sub>comeno~ h<sub>l</sub>ei kai; ouj cronisei*” adding the definite article such that it refers to the soon coming Messiah. The writer of the Qumran document interprets this as “the interpretation is that the last time will be long in coming” without referring to the Messiah at all but rather to the fact that the end time is far removed and the necessity of faith in the interim (Hanson 1988:295-296).

The greatest difference between the Qumran writings and Hebrews is seen in the hermeneutical differences between these writers. For the writer of Hebrews, the Messiah has already come, and thus his interpretation of Scripture is christocentric. The Qumran community interpreted Scripture without reference to the Messiah, but rather with reference to themselves and their own context (Hanson 1988:297).

Ellingworth (1993:48-49) notes that while there is some similarity between Hebrews and the Qumran corpus, it is largely agreed that the influence of Qumran on Hebrews had been overstated and even exaggerated (see Grässer 1964:171-217). There is, what seems to be, some similarity in the context into which the documents are written, namely, “a radical criticism of the Jerusalem cultus and priesthood” (Ellingworth (1993:48), the resultant difference is that the Qumran community sought to adhere to a more rigorous legalism, while Hebrews advocates a greater adherence to Christ as opposed to strict practice of the law. Lane closes his comparison of Hebrews with the Qumran documents by concluding that “There is no sound basis for affirming that Qumran provides the conceptual background for Hebrews. Similarities because of the traditional exegesis of the OT are insufficient to offset the striking differences between Qumran and Hebrews” (1991:cviii).

#### 2.6.4. *Apostolic Fathers*

In the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians 13:4 we find the IF, “*legei gar to pneuma to agion*” (c.f. 22:1) preceding a quotation from Jr 9:23-24. In 15:2 of the same letter we notice the IF; “*legei gar pou*” reminiscent of Heb 2:6 followed by a string of five quotations connected with the phrases “*kai palin*” (15:3), “*kai palin legei*” (15:4), “*dia touto*” (15:5) and “*kai palin*” (15:5) similar to the catena in Hebrews 1. This, because of the dating would lead us to conclude that the writer is familiar with the book of Hebrews as he quotes it in his letter (17:1; 17:5) and alludes to it (19:2; 36:1).

## 2.7. CLOSING COMMENTS REGARDING THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULAE

Our primary concern in this chapter is to define, determine and distinguish the IF's in Hebrews. We have noted that there are a number of challenges in this process – in the definition itself with respect to allusions and echoes, in the determination of what constitutes an IF and lastly in distinguishing the method of Hebrews in the phrasing of his IF's with respect to that of the other New Testament writers and of the other early church writers.

We have seen that the writer shows a preference for a present tense speaking verb as opposed to the emphasis of the rest of the New Testament for a verb of writing and to a lesser degree a 'prophecy fulfilled' IF. We have noted that the author of Hebrews has a decidedly Trinitarian view of a speaking God whose words were recorded through hidden and lesser important human authors but the written word is no less authoritative than the spoken word of God Himself.

Our last analysis has demonstrated that while the author writes in a particularly Jewish method, his writing is without comparison to anything we have extant today. He writes in order to be understood and to move his hearer to understand that it is not his own voice with which he speaks but with the authority of God Himself whose spoken word must be heard and obeyed.

## CHAPTER III - TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE AUTHOR'S HERMENEUTIC

Mickelsen (1963:5-6) notes that “principles of hermeneutics are precepts which express or describe the various ways followed by interpreters to get at meaning.” If by ‘hermeneutic’ we mean the interpretive principles used by the author in interpreting the Old Testament, then what is the hermeneutic of the author of Hebrews? What then were the precepts of the author of Hebrews which brought about his understanding of the meaning of various passages? What interpretive keys are evident in the book of Hebrews in terms of the writer’s method of the handling of the Old Testament?

Our role here is simply to postulate observed principles evident in the IF’s alone. Lane (1991:xlvii) cautions against arrogant conclusions and sweeping generalisations pertaining to the interpretation of the book of Hebrews; “Interpretation calls for humility. Any critical reconstruction must be proposed as tentative and exploratory in nature.”

Mickelsen (1963:5) states that there are two dimensions to biblical interpretation. Firstly, the interpreter is concerned about understanding the original meaning of a passage. Secondly, an interpreter has in mind the context or the concern of his audience which he will be addressing and thus, changes in meaning will be evident and are to be expected in any work where interpretation is carried out. Thus, the predicament of the audience of Hebrews is uppermost in mind as the writer lays out his argument. His purpose is to persuade them by the correct interpretation of the Old Testament and by the authority of the Old Testament itself leading to the climactic warning in 12:25; “be careful that you do not disregard the one who is speaking” (Burns 1996:603).

### 3.1. THE NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Hulitt Gloer (1991:3) finds four reasons why the New Testament writers used the Old Testament; “(1) to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s purposes and of the prophetic witness of the Old Testament Scriptures... (2) as a source of ethical instruction and edification of the church... (3) to interpret contemporary events... (4) to prove a point on the assumption that the Scripture is God’s Word.”

All of these points are found in the book of Hebrews; his speaker of the Old Testament is God Himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that which he says pertains to His Son. The author’s purpose in quoting Scripture is to “strengthen, encourage, and exhort the tired and weary members of a house church to respond with courage and vitality to the prospect of renewed suffering in view of the gifts and resources God has lavished upon them” (Lane 1991:1). While some may disagree with some of the issues in this statement, none will disagree that the outright purpose to evoke a flagging faith by those of the community of faith. Thus the writer’s purpose is to instruct and edify the church. The interpretation of contemporary events in the writer’s day of writing and indeed of all of the New Testament writers is the incarnated person and salvation work of Christ. This was the shared contemporary event that shaped the worldview and interpretation of all of the Scriptures as decidedly Christological. The last point regarding the assumption that Scripture is God’s Word and that this was the basis of the authority of the writer needs hardly to be stated.

## 3.2. THE THEOLOGY OF HEBREWS COMPARED TO THAT OF THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### 3.2.1. *The Theology of Hebrews*

Barth (1962:76-77) examines the Old Testament quotations in the book of Hebrews and finds the following aspects. These are incredibly helpful in that it provides a comparative list of issues regarding the author's hermeneutic derived from the entirety of the book not just those found in the IF's. Barth lists the following methods employed by the writer of Hebrews;

- The fact that he looks for Jesus in the Old Testament and especially as to how Jesus fulfils the offices of king, priest and shepherd.
- The fact that he hears a living voice rather than reads or sees this mediator.
- The fact that there are multiple ways in which this voice speaks; within the godhead, to man and by mankind.
- That which is spoken must be carefully considered and critically weighed up in order that the exegete may interpret freely and proclaim that which is eternal and lasting as opposed to that which is transitory and fading.
- The bases of the exegetical judgements to be made are the continual invitation and piercing call to worship God by the people of God. The author is an exegete of the Bible who by hearing, believing and delivering the call of God, worships God.

### 3.2.2. *The Theology of the New Testament*

It seems that the writers of New Testament theologies each approach the subject from a different standpoint and highlight a different aspect of New Testament

themes (Morris 1986:9). For Rudolf Bultmann, his two volume, *Theology of the New Testament* presents two theologies derived from Paul and John while the teachings of Jesus are dealt with separately as a “presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of that theology itself” (1956:3). Kümmel (1974) in his *The Theology of the New Testament according to Its Major Witnesses: Jesus – Paul – John*, formulates his understanding of theology from these three sources, yet seems unified to a greater degree. Donald Guthrie (1981) presents his theology along the lines of systematic theology under the headings; God, man and his world, Christology, the mission of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, the future, the New Testament approach to ethics and, in contrast to many others, Scripture lastly. Morris (1986) approaches his largely under the headings of the New Testament books with the exception of Paul and the gospels of Luke, Acts and John which are subdivided into various doctrines.

So, it seems that there are different approaches and indeed different understandings of what theology proper is and what is to be included or excluded, what is primary and ought to follow.

### 3.3. THE HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS

#### 3.3.1. *The Spoken Nature of the Old Testament*

The primary and most clearly observed hermeneutical principle of Hebrews must surely be that of the spoken nature of God’s revelation (McCullough 1979:379). For the writer of Hebrews, the fundamental hermeneutical principle is that in the Old Testament, God is speaking. Not once does he use the word *gegraptai*, the most commonly used word in the IF’s of the majority of New Testament writers (Guthrie 2004 :274). He doesn’t use “according to the Scripture(s).” Not once does the writer ask his readers to subjugate themselves to written things, to the law or to a book.

We have seen that this stands in stark contrast to the rest of the New Testament, which focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on that which is written, not that which

is spoken. For the writer of Hebrews, God is a speaking God; a God who communicates verbally with His people.

One of Guthrie's seven schools of understanding of different hermeneutical principles assessed in chapter 1 is the hermeneutic of a living voice. It seems that it is this principle which the writer of Hebrews would most readily give credence to.

### 3.3.2. *The Trinitarian Nature of the God of the Old Testament*

The speaker of the Old Testament is not merely God the Father, but as we have seen, includes the words of the Son and the Holy Spirit. We have seen that each member of the Trinity speak the words of Scripture and that "He," the third person singular verb ending is applied to Father, Son and Holy Spirit interchangeably. This has been explored in depth already (see 2.3.4.2) and a short reminder here of what has been said is sufficient.

### 3.3.3. *The Dynamic Nature of the Old Testament*

God's revelation is not static and fixed in an historical context which was a 'word' for the specific bygone era, and which no longer applies to the present and the context of the first readers of the book of Hebrews. Rather, God's word is 'living and active.' It is dynamic. It is now. It is God and you. It is a 'face to face' confrontation and conversation between speaking-living-God and reader-audience. It is God Himself, first person, present tense, active mood. This point cannot be overstated. The elaboration of the points above in terms of the author's interpretive principle of the Old Testament is summarised in this: "God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is speaking to you now." Moreover, this God must be heard and heeded for those who do not, will not escape punishment (2:1-3; 10:29-31; 12:25). God's same word is spoken with equal authority and equal effect to a contemporary generation as to what it had to a previous generation.



### 3.3.4. *The Concentrated and Singular Focus on the Old Testament*

Here we simply note the number of times that the author of Hebrews quotes the Old Testament with respect to the length of the book. His concern is to understand and expound what the Old Testament says. His focus is singularly on the Old Testament alone for he does not quote any other source except the law, prophets and writings of the Old Testament. Lane (1991:cxv) observes that “Hebrews is impregnated with the OT... Every chapter is marked by explicit or implicit references to the biblical text.” The writers concern is to communicate with his audience and to expound the Old Testament. This means therefore that the writer of Hebrews not only considered the Old Testament as authoritative but also as adequate and sufficient to convey the message that his audience needed to hear.

### 3.3.5. *The ‘Hidden’ Interpreter of the Old Testament*

Before moving on to the final interpretive principle, I would like to tentatively suggest another perhaps more debatable interpretive key, and perhaps one which even the author of Hebrews is unaware. It has been stated here and elsewhere that there is decidedly little information which give clues to the identity of the author. This could quite simply be because the readers were well aware of the identity of the author who perhaps was also their pastor such that he had no need to explain “his awareness of their problems and the appropriateness of his potentially offensive appeals” (Burns 1996:588).

Nonetheless, it is not the voice of this man that is ‘heard’ in this brief “word of exhortation,” but rather the spoken voice of God. The author presents God and His spoken words to them not himself. Certainly, the writer is evident, especially in the closing personal postscript (13:18-25), but the focus of his message to them is not himself. He steps backward and presents the spoken message of God, rather than his own. The basis of his appeal is to God’s spoken words, the reasoning is secondary, resultant and a natural conclusion.

Some will state in response to this that a point is being made where there is not one to be made and that this is contrived and superficial. But consider, with regards to the identity of the author, how different this book (if one can call it that) is to that of any of other New Testament books and especially Paul's epistles (Guthrie 1981:974). My focus, now, is not on the introductory 'letter openers' found in the epistles, where Paul names himself as the author but rather the fact that Paul is so clearly 'in' his letters. He tells the Corinthians, "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Cor 11:1). He is a disciple and leader. He tells the Thessalonians to "imitate us" (2 Th 3:7) as he presents himself as their example which they were to emulate (2 Th 3:9). He gives Timothy and Titus clear pastoral instructions occasionally prefacing this with "I charge you..." and "I want you to..." Paul is the example to the churches as "a preacher and an apostle and a teacher" (2 Tm 1:11; 1Tm 2:7). He must therefore, of necessity, speak in first person, give directions and be 'as large as life.' Even Peter is not dissimilar to this in his letters, using phrases like "I urge you..." (1 Pt 2:11) and "I exhort the elders..." (1 Pt 5:11). The person of John is also evident (but less so than Paul and Peter) in his letters as he repeats the phrase, "I am writing to you," or "I write to you" and is present at the end of his gospel and throughout the book of Revelation. Luke is present as he writes his gospel for it "seemed good to me also...to write an orderly account" and again in Acts he comments that "in the first book...I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach..." and is present with Paul in chapter 16 onwards and speaks in the first person plural. James is decidedly present in the phrase "my brothers" repeated eight times. Matthew is the only other New Testament author similar to Hebrews in that they are 'hidden' from their audience. They are characters behind the text and, indeed, in the text but retiring and reserved. Is this perhaps a Jewish form of writing or is it a personality trait of Matthew and of the writer of Hebrews?

The only time "I" and "me" are used by the author of Hebrews outside of his closing personal message is when God is the subject speaking in the Old Testament quotations and once in 11:32 where the author is apparent, "Kai; tiv epti legwẽ epileiyei me gar dihgoumenon ol crono~ peri;..." (and what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of...).

Other than this single exception, the writer's concern is to let God be heard and not himself. Why do I include this as a hermeneutical principle? It would suggest that the writer is not simply bashful but rather, if the Old Testament is the spoken word of the living God with his people in a 'face to face' confrontation, then the writer is concerned to withdraw himself and to allow God to address His people personally. This principle is also noted in how the writer of Hebrews quotes his Old Testament sources. We have already seen that of the 32 quotations, only 3 have human speakers. The curious IF, "someone has testified somewhere, saying" (2:6) encapsulates his concern for human speakers to remain hidden from the attention of the audience.

Yet, in spite of his 'timidity' he remains authoritative. Nowhere does the writer express the notion that he is writing a tentative exposition nor that he may be wrong in his exposition of the Old Testament passages that he quotes (Guthrie 1981:974-975). He is gentler than Paul, using words of exhortation rather than of command, but he is no less authoritative than the apostle. But the authority is not that of his own, but that of the living voice of God Himself.

### 3.3.6. *The Christological Focus of the Old Testament*

Simply stated, the Old Testament passages are interpreted through the framework of who the Son is and what he had come to do. "The life, death and resurrection of Jesus became for early Christians the hermeneutical key for their interpretation and application of the Jewish Scriptures" (Evans 2004:145). For the writer of Hebrews like the other New Testament authors, there was no doubt that the Scriptures spoke of and were fulfilled in Christ. Ellingworth states this as "Christ was already at work in OT times, even an OT text without a future reference...may be applied to Christ" (1993:41-42).

Thus, to modify our summary of the author's hermeneutic; "God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is speaking to you now and what He says concerns His Son." This summary statement concludes the findings of this dissertation and in one phrase brings all the elements together.

### 3.4. ANSWERING THE INITIAL QUESTION

In the introduction the question was posed; if, in the past, God spoke to the Old Testament forefathers through the prophets and contrastingly “in these last days has spoken to us by the Son,” then why does the writer include the words of the Old Testament prophets (and as frequently as he does) as being the words still spoken as authoritative in his own day when indeed it is proposed that there is a new dispensation in which the Son speaks and not the prophets?

The answer to this initially puzzling question can now be answered. The words of the Old Testament prophets, as we have seen, are not their words alone, but the words of the Trinitarian God spoken through the prophets. It is the voice of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit which speaks in the three fold division of Scripture, the Law, the Prophets and in the Writings. Therefore, the Son of God, the pre-existent Christ, speaks in the Old Testament through the mouth of the prophets and that which He says pertains to Himself. Scripture is thus a self-revelation of God. In the Old Testament, God the Son speaks of Himself as He will be in the incarnated flesh. He says I am who I will be, or perhaps, I will be that which I am. But His testimony is not purely his own; it is spoken by Father, Son and Spirit and or the writer of Hebrews these three are one ‘He.’

## CHAPTER IV – IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY HERMENEUTIC APPROACHES

My concern here is to point out the differences between the principles derived from the IF's of Hebrews as stated above and the modern application of these same principles. The issues explored above will therefore be examined one by one as they appear above.

### 4.1. GOD IS SPEAKING TO US TODAY

In order to fully appreciate the enormity of what the author of Hebrews is saying, let us consider the matter by looking at a statement derived from a conservative view of the doctrine of Scripture. Conservative evangelicals heartily affirm and readily agree along with Packer that in Scripture, God has spoken (see Packer's book by the same title printed in 1964) and that God has spoken in space and time. But, with both of these statements, I believe that the author of Hebrews would disagree. God has not spoken—God is speaking. He is speaking today and what He says today is what He has always been saying. In terms of the historic revelatory nature of God's dealings with his people Israel, this is understood by Hebrews as "in the Old Testament, God is speaking," and for us today in terms of the written nature of the book of Hebrews to his audience; "in the book of Hebrews, God is speaking." The moment this statement is modified into a past tense statement, it is incorrect in that it neglects the present nature of God's communication with His audience. While it is better than past tense, I am sure that the phrase, "God has been speaking" is still unsatisfactory for it says nothing about God's activity in the present tense and relegates the God of history to a bygone era making God dated and therefore, possibly irrelevant. The point here is that what God had said in the past may be different to what is needed today. For Hebrews, God always speaks to the present generation. What He says is always up to date and surprisingly, no different to what He has been saying all along. Thus God is always a God of the present speaking in the present tense to the present generation but saying that which He has always said. For the modern man,

infatuated with the experiential, a present tense God who speaks to a current generation is good news, but to the modern mind, in order to be contemporary He must say something new, not 'the same old thing.' For Packer and other evangelicals, the statement "God has spoken" is half the truth and without the emphasis of the relevance of that which God has said for today, God is perhaps understood as a God with godly attributes none of which apply to the world and experience of the present hearer.

We do not therefore have to stand with Moses at Mount Sinai to hear God speaking. God's word has been recorded for us to hear today. It is available now. Paul says that it is near you and in your mouth and heart (Rm 10:8). Poythress unpacks this by saying that, "God himself instructs us about how he speaks. He speaks not only in the present moment, but in the present through a message given, preserved, translated and applied through time... God in the present tells you a story containing a notice of how he dealt with people in the past" (1999:131-132).

What God has said at various points in time to an audience in the past applies and is living and relevant for us and to us today. Thus, we cannot neglect the historical context into which God spoke, nor can we neglect the relevance of what is being said to us today.

#### 4.2. GOD IN THREE PERSONS – BLESSED COMPLEXITY

The second hermeneutic proposed that was evident in the IF's in the book of Hebrews was the Trinitarian nature of the God of the Old Testament. It is my opinion though that while this is affirmed in principle, in practice the reality of this affirmation is very different. Essentially, the doctrine of the Trinity is complex and beyond comprehension. In practice, this doctrine is given lip service, but in practice, we practice as monotheists.

The evangelical church of today is divided over the doctrine of the Trinity—not divided over the principle of the trinity, but in practice the church has focused on one person of the Trinity to the exclusion of the other members. The focus in many of the

churches is on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit and the age of the Spirit and the signs and wonders of the Spirit are the primary focus in teaching and preaching.

Similarly, other churches are singularly infatuated with God the Father, with the plan of salvation and the election of the blessed and maybe even the election of the damned.

Still others have become concerned with the extremities of these two doctrines and the practice evident in these churches and see “Christ alone,” that is the procurement of salvation in Christ, His ascension and His reign emphasizing the blessing we have in Christ and how we will reign with Him. The Father and Holy Spirit are affirmed but are in the background. Where is the ‘Evangelical Church of the Blessed Trinity’ to be found in our day? Divided into three camps, it would seem.

Could it be that while the principle of the Trinity in the Statements of Faith in churches and theological institutions is affirmed, that in practice, it goes no further than that? Are churches and theological institutions, for the sake of simplicity in affirming the complexity of the doctrine of the Trinity, perhaps, guilty of oversimplification of this doctrine? Much can be learnt from the writer of Hebrews about a God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit who all speak and work and co-operate in perfect harmony.

#### 4.3. THE NEED TO MODERNISE GOD – MAKING HIM RELEVANT

Burns (1996:589) verbalises his concern in this regard by stating that his own teaching of Hebrews both in the classroom and in the church has “left me uneasy with a disparity between the Bible’s own use of its text and our sometimes modern misuse of it.”

It is my observation that in the pulpit and in the lecture room, pastors and academics alike have happily accepted and taught that the Bible is an historic document and that it therefore must be treated and spoken of as such. For far too long we have

treated the Bible as God's spoken word to a bygone historic people, which must be understood in its original setting and reinterpreted into today's culture and historic setting in order for God to be relevant to today's modern person. Our task is understood to modernise God and His message. He must be modernised and brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order that He can be heard and understood.

God, after all, speaks Hebrew, Greek and a smattering of Aramaic. His prophets dress in camel hair and togas. The older prophets fight giants and call fire down on altars and the younger apostles try to spread the gospel like they've got the cure for AIDS. What do they know about email and visual presentations, about deadlines and divorce counselling, about school fees and car pools and about rugby and movies? How relevant is their gospel to our context anyway?

To meet the need and the ear of the modern listener, we supposedly, have got to make the message of the Bible and modernise it so making it accessible to the man in the street. The role of pastor and Bible teacher has become understood to be taking 'what God has said' and updating it to make it 'what God wants to say.' Thus the role of pastor and Bible teacher is not unlike that of an interpreter on the mission field where God can't speak the language of the people and it's the task of the interpreter job to translate what God would want to say, if He could.

While we have been studying to become expert translators we have forgotten that God does not need us to interpret for him. The writer of Hebrews addresses this mentality also. What God has said, He says. His message does not require interpretation but proclamation and application. As the writer of Hebrews said in his day, he would say (and if we would recognise it, says) today; "this is what God says to you today. Hear Him."

#### 4.4. THE NEW HERMENEUTIC – THE MULTIPLE MEANINGS MORASS

Having stated that we are to speak the very words of God, this needs to be clarified. We are not to speak our own words but the words of God or rather the Word of God. This title, the Word of God, has largely become redundant simply meaning 'The



Bible' and not what it actually says, the verbal communication of God to human beings.

But we have moved poles away from seeing the Bible as this anymore. We are sophisticated and intelligent, we have grown up and matured in our reading of it and see most clearly that it is not the word of God as we previously thought, but in fact, a word about ourselves. Albert Schweitzer in concluding his work on the life of Jesus stated that "each successive epoch of theology found its own thoughts in Jesus...Each individual created Jesus in accordance with his own character. There is no historical task which so reveals a man's true self as the writing of a Life of Jesus" (1906:6). No longer is the meaning confined to that which was to be found in the text, but the reader determines the meaning. Thus, meaning is reader-response to what is read, or if you like; text + reader = meaning. Vanhoozer commenting on the role of the reader states that, "Reading is not merely a matter of perception but also of production; the reader does not discover so much as create meaning" (1995:301). Previously the reader was the one who was instructed by the text. The reader was the disciple and the learner. Now he is understood to be the one who has a part to play in defining the meaning of the text, he is the rabbi, the teacher and co-author. As Vanhoozer (1995:305-6) demonstrates, if the reader defines meaning then meaning is "indeterminate" and incomplete, furnished and completed ultimately by the reader.

Like the writer of Hebrews, exegetes, teachers, pastors must be "under the text," that is, they must be submissive to it and subservient to it. They cannot place themselves "above the text" and reinterpret the meaning of the text to suit themselves. Again, if we observe the role of the writer of Hebrews as he quotes the Old Testament, we will notice that he is always guided by the text and uses the text to convince and persuade. He does not accomplish this by abusing and violating the message in the quotation which he selects. While it could be argued that he adapted the text to suit his context (see 1.4.1), he did not twist the text to make it say something different and adapt it to say something he wanted it to say.

#### 4.5. EXEGETES SHOULD BE HEARD AND NOT SEEN

Too often interpreters of the Bible, that is preachers and teachers alike, seem to be more concerned about presentation and performance reminiscent of a theatrical performance rather than with the primary concern of ensuring that God's word is heard. "How am I coming across?" seems to be the issue as opposed to "Did I get the message across?" Is there a mistaken identity about who the speaker is? Is it God's word or a human's?

As demonstrated already (see 3.3.5), the writer of Hebrews is conspicuously absent from the book. His concern is to set back and let God speak. It is on the basis of the authority of God that his listeners "must pay close attention to what we have heard" (2:1). If the writer of Hebrews and the human authors he quotes are largely tucked away in order that God be heard and not they themselves, should that not be the case in the church and lecture hall today?

It must be understood that God certainly uses human messengers to deliver His truth. But the preachers, teachers and mouthpieces that God uses, are all messengers of His words. When they begin to include their own message regardless of its content or the sentiment behind it, they no longer operate as God's messengers with God's message. If God has spoken to us, in these last days, by his Son, then why is it that man is still being heard? The 'listener' has become the speaker and the speaker speaks of that which he knows, himself.

#### 4.6. THE BARRENNESS OF ANTHROPOCENTRIC INTERPRETATIONS

Another aspect of concern between the principles evident in Hebrews and those that abound in the church and theological institutions of our day is the exposition of Scripture which conclude without showing the necessity of the person and work of Christ. If Christ is the focus of Scripture, then any biblical message must include a necessary focus on the ministry and identity of Christ. Sermons devoid of Christ are empty and even fraudulent, promising theological Christology and Christological theology and instead delivering anthropological philosophy. Thus many of the

sermons and especially from the Old Testament degenerate into “be-good” or “be like David” messages and cannot be called preaching the gospel at all. If the Old Testament is God’s unfolding plan of salvation which culminates in Christ, then the link between the text and Christ must be clearly established and explained. Again, this is evident in Hebrews as the link between Old Testament quotations and their meaning with respect to Christ and how this applies to the Christian community is established. The Bible is not primarily about us, it is about God’s salvation achieved for us. “Preaching must be theological. Salvation is of the Lord, and the message of the gospel is the theocentric message of the unfolding plan of God for our salvation in Jesus Christ. He who would preach the Word must preach Christ” (Clowney 1961:74).

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