The Epistle to the Hebrews contains about ninety quotations, allusions, or phrases from the Hebrew scriptures. It is widely acknowledged that the author of this epistle was not interested in an exegetical inquiry to discover the literal meaning of the Hebrew texts or the earlier Israelite authors’ intended messages. The Hebrew scriptures were assumed to have been written by God—or to be the utterances of the Holy Spirit or the pre-incarnate Christ—and were used by the author of the epistle to give authority to his faith affirmations about the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Most of the quotations in the epistle are rather straightforward from the Hebrew text or the Septuagint with only minor variations—as if they were quoted from memory—and are trouble free. However, some of the author’s allusions have been missed by a number of commentators. Such is the case of the statement in Heb 1:3, “[God] spoke to us through a son, . . . through whom he created the universe,” which was surely drawn from the wisdom traditions found in

- Pro 8:22, 30, “Yahweh created me [Wisdom] at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old . . . I was beside him like a little child.”

- Wisdom of Solomon 9:1–2, “O God of my fathers . . . who has made all things by your Word and by your Wisdom has formed man.”
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- **Wisdom of Solomon 7:22**, “For Wisdom [is] the fashioner of all things.”
- **Wisdom of Solomon 8:4**, “[Wisdom] glorifies her noble birth by living with God . . . she is an initiate in the knowledge of God, and an associate in his works.”
- **Wisdom of Solomon 9:9**, “With thee is Wisdom, who knows thy works and was present when you made the world.”

The affirmation in Hebrews 1:3, “the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” clearly echoes Wisdom of Solomon 7:25–26,

> [Wisdom] is a breath of the power of God, a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; . . . she is a reflection of the eternal light, a spotless mirror of God’s active power, and image of his goodness. . . . she renews all things.3

Just as the prologue of the Gospel of John reflects the transformation of the feminine הָשְׁתֵּפָה / Σοφία (“Wisdom”) tradition into a masculine λόγος / Χριστός (“Word/Christ”) tradition, so the prologue in the Epistle to the Hebrew reflects the transformation of the הָשְׁתֵּפָה / Σοφία tradition into the γενετός του Θεοῦ / Χριστός (“Son of God/Christ”) tradition. And, whereas Matthew appealed to the Greek text of Isaiah 7:14 for a prophecy of a virgin birth, the author of Hebrews appealed to the metaphor of adoption in Psalm 2, הָשְׁתֵּפָה אֲנִי הָדוֹמֵל אֲנִי הָדוֹמֵל / הָשְׁתֵּפָה יְהוָה יְהוָה “you are my son, today I have begotten you,” (which was a declaration of the divine origin and supremacy of the Israelite monarchy) to proclaim the reality of the “first born” Son of God who sat at “the right hand of Majesty on high.”
and was superior to the angels. Moreover, to support this affirmation, the author appealed to the same metaphor in II Sam 7:14, יָהוָ֙הּ יִתְנַהֲגְנָהּ יִתְנַהֲגְנָהּ מִשָּׁם הַקְּדֻסָּתָּם מִשָּׁם הַקְּדֻסָּתָּם יְדֵי יְהוָֹה יְדֵי יְהוָֹה לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶン לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָבֶן לָb

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body (κοιλίας σου), and I will establish his kingdom.

Buchanan (1976: 15), in his commentary on this epistle, noted that there is no direct or indirect evidence “that the author of Hebrews interpreted Jesus as belonging to the family of David . . . [he] never mentioned David in relation to Jesus or the Messiah.”

HEBREWS 1:6 AND DEUTERONOMY 32:43

הָרְנַגְנֶה נָהָגֵת עָמָה
ci l'ם עֵבֶרְי יַרְדֶם
נַפְשׁ יִשְׁבְּב יְלַרְגֶּר
רָכֵב אֹבְהֵתְהוּ עָמָה
Praise his people, O you nations; for he avenges the blood of his servants, and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and makes expiation for the land of his people.

The quotation in Heb 1:6 presents the reader with two problems. The first is the statement that when God brought the “first born” into the world, the angels (probably the “winds”
and “flames,” mentioned in vs. 7) were already present and were commanded to worship the “first born Son”—despite the prior statement in Heb 1:3, that “[God] spoke to us through a son, . . . through whom he created the universe.” Seemingly then, the title “first born” was not used to designate the “first of creation” but was used as an honorific—differing with Wisdom’s claim in Prov 8:22–23 that “Yahweh created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old . . . when he established the heavens I was there.” Whereas Wisdom claimed to have come before any angels, according to Heb 1:6, the “first born” was greeted by angels already there.

The second problem confronting the reader relates to the difference between what appears in the Hebrew text of Deut 32:43 and what appears in the Septuagint, which was the source for the seven word quotation in Heb 1:6. The thirteen words in the Hebrew text of 32:43 (cited above) were expanded into forty eight words in the Septuagint; and of all these Greek words only seven were quoted in Heb 1:6. In these texts, cited in the next paragraphs, the boldface text corresponds to the Hebrew text of Deut 32:43, and the underlined text matches the quotation in Heb 1:6.

**Deut 32:43**

εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοί ἅμα αὐτῷ καὶ προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ θεοῦ εὐφράνθητε ἔθνη μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐνισχύσατε αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ οὐτὶ τὸ αἷμα τῶν οὐρανῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικάσαται καὶ ἐκδικήθη καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ

Praise, ye heavens, with him, and let all the sons of God worship him. Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let
all the angels of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons/servants (עֵזְרָה / יַעַרָה) and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the (his) land (of) his people.

Heb 1:6

But when he again brings the firstborn into the world, he says: “and let all the angels of God worship him.”

The radical difference between the MT “Praise his people, O you nations” and the Septuagint’s “Rejoice, ye heavens, with him” reflects the confusion of an ב and a ב, as attested, for example, in Judges 8:16 where the MT reads

וָיָא חֲפָרָת הַמֶּרֶךְ לְאֵנָשׁ פֶּסֹחַ

And he took the elders of the city and with thorns of the desert and with briers he made known with them the men of Succoth.

The senseless last line here appears in the Septuagint as καὶ ἠλόησεν ἐν αὐτοίς τοῖς ἀνδραῖς τῆς πόλεως “and with them [the thorns and briers] he threshed the men of the city” (after which came the destruction of the tower of Penuel and the killing of the men of that city). In the Vorlage of the Septuagint the MT “he knew/made known” was obviously read as מִלְבַּע מִלְבַּע “he threshed,” which is contextually the pre-
ferred reading. A similar error occurred in the MT of Deut 32:43, where the "Praise, O Gentiles, his people," was—in light of the Septuagintal variant—originally "Praise, O heavens, his people" or "Praise, O heavens, with him" This phrase became corrupted when the " of שפתי was read as an, and it became נר ות. "Praise, O peoples, his people." The ambiguity of this phrase was reduced when נר ות was substituted for the שפתי. This change, which survives in the MT שפתי, would have been unnecessary had the original שפתי not been misread as נר ות.

The Septuagint of Deut 32:43 has two doublets. The first one is (a) the εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοὶ ἀμα αὐτῷ (“Praise, O heavens, with him”), reflecting a Vorlage with הרן שפתי נר ות, coupled with (b) the εὐφράνθητε ἔθνη μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῶ (“Rejoice, O nations, with his people”), which reflects a Vorlage with הרן שפתי נר ות. The second doublet is (c) καὶ προσκυνήσωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ “and let all the sons of God worship him,” coupled with (d) καὶ ἐνισχύσωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ “and let all the angels of God strengthen themselves in him.” This second doublet with its "sons of God" and "angels of God" interprets the שפתי / οὐρανοὶ "heavens" mentioned in the first doublet just cited. Thus, the Song of Moses began with the vocative "O heavens" in Deut 32:1, and apparently ended with the same vocative in Deut 32:43, providing a classical incipit and inclusio—clinching the argument that the MT נר ות was not original but a secondary clarification once שפתי was misread as נר ות. Thus, when the author of Hebrews quoted the phrase “and let all the angels of God worship him,” he used...
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a phrase found only in a doublet which was totally unrelated to the Hebrew text and context of the Song of Moses.

HEBREWS 1:8–9 AND PSALM 45:6–8

In the first verses of Psalm 45 the author stated with perfect clarity, “I address my verses to the king . . . [for] you are the fairest of the sons of men . . . therefore God has blessed you for ever.” But this focus did not deter the author of Hebrews from appropriating part of the psalm as a hymn of praise for the “Son of God” who was the fairest of the “sons of God.”

Despite the fact that the 2ms suffix יִתְנַה “your” appears fourteen times in Psa 45:1–5, 7–9, clearly refering to the king of Israel or Judah, the suffix in 45:9 was read by the author of Hebrews as refering to the Son of God, following the Septuagint’s ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεός εἰς τὸν αἰώνα τοῦ αἰώνος, “your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” And many subsequent translators have followed the Greek texts of Psalms and Hebrews, which understood the יִתְנַה in the phrase כָּאָהֲלָהֲם אלָהֲמָה יִתְנַה כָּאָהֲלָהֲם to be the vocative “O God.” Thus, the יִתְנַה “your throne” came to mean that the throne of God and/or the throne of the divine Son would be for ever and ever.

Given the fourteen יִתְנַה suffixes refering to the earthly king, it is most likely that the psalmist intended כָּאָהֲלָהֲם אלָהֲמָה יִתְנַה כָּאָהֲלָהֲם to mean “your divine throne,” with the יִתְנַה used here as an adjective rather than as a vocative.” This statement about Israel’s or Judah’s “divine throne” being “for ever and ever” reflects the same affirmation made in Psa 89:29, 35–37, “I will establish his line for ever . . . I will not lie to David. His line shall endure for ever, and his throne as long as the sun before me.”
The last phrase from Psalm 45 quoted in Heb 1:9, “God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows (יְהוָה לְךָ),” indicates how the author of Hebrews found evidence for “God the Father” and “God the Son.” The “your” suffix in the phrase “your throne, O God” (1:8) had as its antecedent the Son; but the “your” suffix in the phrase “your God has anointed you” (1:9) has as its reference God the Father. And, whereas the הָעָם “your fellows” in Ps 45:7 referred to fellow monarchs of the nations surrounding Israel and Judah, for the author of Hebrews it referred to the heavenly comrades of the Son—the angels who were commanded to worship the Son (1:6) and were the “ministering spirits sent forth to serve” (1:14).

HEBREWS 2:7, 9 AND PSALM 8:5

You diminished him a little from God, and crowned him with glory and honor

You diminished him a little less than angels, and crowned him with glory and honor;

You diminished him a little less than angels, and crowned him with glory and honor;
The single word "little" became translated into Greek with two words: βραχύς "short" and τι ἀλλ’ "some, somewhat, only," both of which were used for space, status, or time. Thus translations differ as to whether the βραχύς τι meant “a little lower” (spacial/social status) or “a little while” (temporal). The Hebrew text of Psa 8:5 clearly means “you have made him [= Adam = human beings] only a little lower than God,” thereby affirming the very high social status of humans who were given dominion over the works of God’s hands, as stated also in Gen 1:26–28. But once the θεός “God” was read or interpreted here as אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים “the sons of God” or “angels,” then the βραχύς τι, which translated the מְנַלֵּז "a little lower" (with reference to status), was interpreted by some as “a little while.”

Thus, while the Vulgate, and most English translations rendered the βραχύς τι of Psa 8:5 as “a little lower than,” the same βραχύς τι when quoted in Heb 2:7 became “for a little while lower” in the RSV, NAB, NAS, NAU, NJB, and NRS. These latter translations rightly reflect the argument of the author of Hebrews who has taken liberty with Psa 8:7 by interpreting the ἄνθρωπος “man” and the Λόγος ἄνθρωπος “the son of man” to be the “last Adam” (I Cor 15:45), even though the Hebrew has אֱנוֹשׁ “Enosh” for “man” rather than אֵין אָדָם “Adam”—not to mention that the Hebrew has אלהים “God” rather than “angels.” But for the author of Hebrews the psalmist’s recognition that Adam (= “human beings”) had dominion on earth was but a coded revelation that the Son of God had dominion over everything. The Son became incarnate on earth for a little while (βραχύς τι) as Jesus, who as a son of Adam could demonstrate his dominion...
over death and the devil—while at the same time expiate the sins of all his earthly brethren, the children of Adam and of Abraham.

**HEBREWS 8:9** AND **JEREMIAH 31:32**

The initial ‘Behold!’ (= ἰδοὺ) of Jer 31:31 is not found in Heb 8:8b; and the ὁράσις Κυρίου “oracle of Yahweh” (= φησίν κύριος “says the Lord”) became in Heb 8:8–10 λέγει Κυρίου “declares the Lord.” The more significant differences in the verses below (highlighted in boldface) have a ready explanation.9

**Jer 31:32**

...my covenant which they broke, though I **was their husband**, oracle of Yahweh.

*or*

...my covenant which they broke, and I **was disgusted with** them, oracle of Yahweh.

**Jer 38:31 (LXX)**

...for they abode not in my covenant, and I **disregarded** them, saith the Lord.

**Heb 8:9**

...because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I **disregarded them** them, declares the Lord.
The translation of בֶּן־לֶלֶל in the Septuagint as ἴμελησα “I disregarded” may reflect a Vorlage with בֶּן־לֶלֶל “to loathe, to abhor,” rather than בֶּן־לֶל. However, an emendation here is probably unnecessary. Hebrew בֶּן־לֶל had more than the one meaning recognized in current Hebrew lexicons. It may be a homograph of the two meanings attested for the Arabic بَعْل (baʾala): (1) “he became a husband, or lord, or master,” with its noun بَعْل (baʾl) “husband, lord, master, owner,” and (2) “he became confounded or perplexed, he was disgusted,” with its participle بَعْل (baʾil) “confounded, perplexed” (Lane 1: 228). The translation of בֶּן־לֶל into Greek as ἴμελησα “disregarded” makes sense once the second definition of the cognate בֶּן־לֶל (baʾala) comes into focus. Instead of interpreting בֶּן־לֶל as “I was their husband,” the context, the versions, and cognates suggest that the phrase meant “I was disgusted with them.”

**Heb 10:37–38 and Hab 2:3–4**

The quotation of Hab 2:3–4 in Heb 10:37–38 contains an abbreviated and a rearranged text, as well as significant departures from the Masoretic text in favor of the Septuagint. The texts to be compare include
For still the vision awaits its time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seem slow, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.
Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail,
but the righteous shall live by his faith.

For the vision is yet for a time,
and it will rise at the end, and not in vain:
though he should tarry, wait for him;
for he will surely come, and will not tarry.
If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him:
but the just shall live by my faith.

Hebrews 10: 37–38

For yet a little while
(= MT Hab 2:3\textsuperscript{a})
the coming one shall come and shall not tarry;
(= MT Hab 2:3\textsuperscript{d})
but my righteous one shall live by faith,
(= MT Hab 2:4\textsuperscript{b})
and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

(= LXX Hab 2:4a)

The MT מְשַׁחְתּוּ חָרָם is reflected in the first of the two ὅσον, meaning “a while”; and the חָרָם לֹא “appointed time” was read as a poetic preposition and an adverb—לֹא לְכָלָה “for a while”—reflected by the second ὅσον. There is nothing in Heb 10:37 for the MT צְנִית רָחַב “vision.” Nor is there anything in 10:37 for the MT צְנִית לֹא יָכַב אֵין הָעָדָה תשְׁכִין לְךָ and its translation in the Septuagint as καὶ ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας καὶ σύκ εἰς κενόν ἐὰν ύπομείνων αὐτὸν “it hastens to the end, it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it.”

The translation of the MT אלֵיצָה לֹא שִׁשָּרָה יִפְשֶׁל בָּו has been very problematic for the following two reasons.

• The pu‘al יִפְשֶׁל “she became swollen” has been widely identified as a cognate of the Arabic عنق (‘afal) “tumor” and عنق (‘afel) “hemorrhoid” (BDB 779), and then paraphrased as a verb or adjective to mean “shall fail” (RSV) “lifted up” (KJV), “puffed up” (ASV, NIV, NIB), “unbelieving” (DRA), “succumb” (NJB), “rash” (NAB), “proud [ones]” (NAS, NAV, NRS, NKJ), with the Vulgate’s having “incredulus.”

• The verb יְשָרָה is commonly identified as יְשָרָה יִשְׁרָה “to be upright,” the cognate of Arabic بسر (yasara) “to be gentle, to be easy”—which, with the modifier בָּא לָה, means “to be right in the eyes of,” i.e., “to be pleasing.” (BDB 448).

However, the MT נְפֶשֶׁל should be corrected to נְפֶשֶׁל, in agreement with the Septuagint’s ὑποστεὶ ἔληπται and its quota-
tion in Heb 10:37. The Hebrew stem נָּכַּל, as understood by the Greek translators, is the cognate of Arabic عَبْل (‘abala) “he held back, he drew back, he withheld, he diverted, he was cut off [by death]” (Lane 5: 1941–1942; Hava 451). With this definition in focus, the corrected MT נָּכַל אֲלֹהִי רֵיחַ הַנֶּפֶשׁ בַּי means “his unrighteous soul was cut off,” i.e., the unrighteous have been cutoff [from life], but “the righteous shall live by faithfulness.” With this correction of נָּכַל to נָכַל and with insight from the cognate عَبْل (‘abala), the contrast between the fate of the unrighteous and the fate of the righteous is clear—the former dies and the latter lives.

The Greek translation (including the quotation in Heb 2:4) of the MT קְרֵיָה כַּל הַנֶּפֶשׁ בַּי as οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου ἐν αὐτῷ “my soul has no pleasure in him,” reflects a Vorlage with לֹא שָׁרָה נָפָשׁ בַּי. The Greek translators did not have a text with the 3fs perfect ישׁרָה “she was upright,” but a 3fs perfect of שַׁרָה “to have pleasure.” This stem is the cognate of Arabic صر (sar/surra) “he rejoiced, was glad, happy, he experienced a pleasure, or delight.” (Lane 4:1337).

HEBREWS 10:5–7 AND PSALM 40:6–8
Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

Then I said, “Here I am, I have come — it is written about me in the scroll — ‘I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’”

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire; but ears/body you prepared for me: burnt-offering and sin offering you did not require.

Then I said, Behold, I come: in the volume of the book it is written concerning me, I desired to do your will, O my God, and your law in the midst of my stomach.

Heb 10:5–7

Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;
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sacrifices and offerings you have not desired.  
“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come  
(in the roll of the book it is written of me)  
to do your will, O God.’”

The Hebrew קֶרַחְיוֹן לִפְרִיהַ הָיִם “you have bored ears for me” is translated literally into Greek by Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian, and in a number of Septuagint manuscripts. But the major Septuagint manuscripts (Vaticanus, Siniaticus, and Alexandrinus) have σώμα “body.” There was evidently a confusion in the (oral) tradition of קֶרַחְיוֹן “ear” (ὁτία) with הָיִם “bone, body, self” (= ὀστέον or σώμα; see especially Lam 4:7, ἰσραήλ ἔπληκτον “they were ruddy in body”). If the original were הָיִם = σώμα = “body,” the verb may well have been קֶרַחְיוֹן rather than the MT קֶרַחְיוֹן. This קֶרַחְיוֹן (from בָּרָה) would be the cognate of Arabic بَرَايَة (baraya) “to cleanse, to restore the body;” as in the expression “He [God] restored him to convalescence from disease, sickness or malady”; and the noun بَارَايِر (bâri‘ār) “recovering from disease, sickness, or malady, convalescent, healthy”(Lane 1: 178[form 4], 179; Hava 26). The Greek κατηρτίζω “prepared” would translate Hebrew קֶרַחְיוֹן “to prepare,” not the MT קֶרַחְיוֹן “to dig, to pierce.”

The מְלֶלֶת הֶכְלָאָה “scroll of scripture” may be a reference to just Psalm 119, which contains many references about “delighting in the law” (verses 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, as well as Psalms 1:2; 112:1; and 37:31).
NOTES

1. Henry Shires (1974, 62–63) noted that in Hebrews “at least 28 O.T. passages are cited, and 21 of these are not quoted elsewhere in the N.T.” Given the varied length of the quotations in Hebrews, I prefer to count phrases rather than verses or passages.

2. A good example of minor variations having no theological significance is found in Heb 1:11–12 where Psa 102:25–26 is quoted, which reads יִלְּכֶה מָשָּׂרֵךְ וּבָאֹל כַּלָּהּ תַּחֲלֵם יְחָלֵם׃ and all of them like a garment will wear out; like a raiment you change them and they will be changed.” In the Septuagint (101:26) ἵματι τοῦ ἔνδυσεν μετά τοῦ ἀλλάσσειν, “garment” and περιβολάτην translated ἐλεύθερον “raiment,” with the repeated use of ἰματία “to change” matched by the repeated use of ἀλλάσσω “to change.” But in Heb 1:10 ἵματι τοῦ ἔνδυσεν “garment” appears twice and περιβολάτην “cloak” once; and the first ἀλλάσσω in the Septuagint became in the epistle ἐλίσσω “to roll up.”

3. James Moffatt (1924: 6) cited Wis 7:25–26 and commented, The unique relation of Christ to God is one of the un-borrowed truths of Christianity, but it is stated here in borrowed terms. The writer is using metaphors which had been already applied in Alexandrian theology to Wisdom and Logos.

By contrast, George Wesley Buchanan (1976: 6–7) made no reference to Wis 7:25 ff., although he quoted Pss of Sol 8:2–14 as commentary on the “concept of time and creation” found in Heb 1:2 and 11:3.

4. Compare Deut 32:18, יָרוּ הַלַּחָן וְהַשָּׁבָשׁ אֶל הַמַּהֲלָתִים, “(the) Rock that begot you you forgot, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.”
5. The fragment of the Song of Moses which was found in Qumran Cave 4, cited by Buchanan (1976: 15), reads, “Praise his people, O heavens.”

6. For other example of the confusion of ו and צ, see Delitzsch (1920): 119, §131.

7. So interpreted, Psalm 45 can be included among the biblical texts dealing with the divine right of kings, such as
   - The government of the earth is in the hands of the Lord, and over it he will raise up the right man for the time (Sir 10:4).
   - For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High (Wis 6:3).
   - For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God (Rom 13:1).
   - He appointed a ruler for every nation, but Israel is the Lord’s own portion, whom, being his firstborn, he disciplined, and allotting to him the light of his love, he does not neglect him (Sir 17:17–18)

8. See the Addendum at the end of this study for an explanation of the difficulties underlying the various translations of Psalm 8:2.

9. The words in italics indicate almost complete agreement between these passages in Hebrews 8 and Jeremiah 31. The words below in boldface indicate distinct disparity between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint tradition. The few underlined words highlight minor variations.

   Jeremiah 31:31 “Behold! the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the
hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, oracle of Yahweh. 33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, the oracle of Yahweh: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, oracle of Yahweh; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Hebrews 8:8b The days will come, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I paid no heed to them, says the Lord. 10 This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach every one his fellow or every one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

10. The Syriac reads with the Septuagint “and so I despised (διότι [bēsīt]) them,” but the Vulgate reads “ego dominatus sum eorum.”

11. Lane (4: 1555 and 5: 1941) cited the expression عيلته عبول (ʿabalathu ʿabûlu) and شعبته شوب (šaʿabathu šaʿûbu), both
meaning “death separated him from his companions.”

12. For the confusion of א and ב, see Delitzsch (1920): 115, §118.

13. For the confusion of י and ו, see Delitzsch (1920): 103–105.
14. Also noteworthy is سرور (surûr) “happiness, or joy, or gladness, . . . or dilatation of the bosom with delight or pleasure . . .” (Lane 4: 1339; KBS 4:1657). Although BDB (1057) recognized the Arabic cognate of Hebrew סַרַּר (surr) “navel string” (＝سرور [surr]), the verb סָרָה and its cognates were not cited.

**ADDENDUM**

**Matt 21:16–17 and Psa 8:2–3 (MT)**

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant; and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?’”

Jesus’ quotation of Psa 8:2 in this conversation with his adversaries follows either the Septuagint or a Hebrew text in which one letter was different from that found in the Masoretic text. The Hebrew text used by the Greek translators did not have the MT מֹשֵׁל “bulwark, strength” but מַעֲנֵי meaning מִזְמוּר “praise,” matching the Vulgate’s lauden, reflecting the well attested confusion of מ and מ, especially when the sublinear stroke of the מ was abbreviated so as to appear as a מ or
Delitzsch (1920: 113 §112d) cited among his examples of such confusion (1) Isa 44:14 having in the MT תִּירָא, but two manuscripts listed by Kennicott have רַע; and (2) the Qere and Kethib in Psa 31:3 and 71:3, with the variants קֵיתִּי וְנֶלָּה “habitation” and נַלְוָה וְנֶלָּה “stronghold.” The stems נֶלַי and נֶלַי “to praise” are cognates of Arabic ﷽ (‘an) and ﷽ (‘anaya) (Lane 6: 2293). In Neh 12:37, the וֹלֵמִילֶשֶׁר הָיָה נַלְוָה הָנוֹהַה “at the gate of the fountain, and before them” appears in the Septuagint as ἐπὶ πολὺς τοῦ ἀνεβάλνι κατέναντι αὐτῶν ἀνέβησαν “at the gate in order to praise before them”—showing that the translators understood the נַלְוָה as a Hiph‘il of נַלָּה “to praise.” (Contra Rahlfs [1935: 947] who emended the τοῦ αὐτῶν to simply τοῦ αὐτόν, making it a partial transliteration of נַלְוָה “the fountain,” as found in Neh 2:14 where the τοῦ translated the נ and the αὐτόν transliterated the נַלְוָה.)

The NIV, NIB, NLT and the DRA follow the Greek and Latin texts of Psa 8:2 and the Greek text of Matt 21:17 by translating the נַלְוָה of Psa 8:2 (MT 3b) as “you ordained praise.” The NLT reads, for example, “You have taught children and nursing infants to give you praise. They silence your enemies who were seeking revenge.” But, whether the original text had נַלְוָה “bulwark” or נַלְוָה “praise,” the problem remains of explaining how or when infantile voices ever did or could or would destroy (כַּפּוֹלֵי / καταλῦσαι) an enemy. Thus, the cluster of words as they stand in the MT of Psa 8:3 (MT) remains an enigma.

However, once the MT נַלְוָה is corrected to נַלָּה “praise” (as found in the Vorlage used by the Greek translators), and the
The last five Hebrew words Psa 8:3 are recognized as a misplaced phrase, clarity comes immediately. At one time the words of Psa 8:2, “you founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and avenger,” must have followed Psa 7:6, which when brought together constitute a logically coherent and balanced stanza that corresponds well with the balanced use of “anger” and “judgment” in Psa 7:11. The reconstructed stanza combining 7:6 and 8:3 would read

Arise, O Yahweh, in your anger,
raise yourself against the fury of my enemies.
Awake, O my God; you decreed judgment
because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

This relocation of 8:3 removes the insurmountable problem of explaining how babies or their infantile voices served as a defense against one’s foes or against God’s foes. With these corrections, Psa 8:3 and 4 can be read as

Out of the mouth of babies and nursing infants
you have perfected praise.
When I look at your heavens . . . .

This interpretation, which finds two errors in the MT—the original נָתַן became corrupted to יְנַתֶּן, and the misplacement of five words from Psalm 7 into Psalm 8—concerns with the texts of Matt 21:16 and the Septuagint text of Psa 8:3. It accounts for the differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts and eliminates all questions about babies destroying either the (mythic) enemies of God or earthly avengers.

Other commentators have struggled to make sense out of these verses as they stand in the MT. For example, Charles Briggs (1906: 63) conjectured
The poet may have been thinking of the creative strength of God’s speech, of Gn. 1, and so of the strength that God had established in human speech even of little children as superior to physical prowess. It is probable that he was thinking of the divine strength as recognized and praised by children, in accord with the rendering of the א.

More recent commentators have been more creative but not necessarily more convincing. Mitchell Dahood (1966: 48–50) reworked the MT מ"עא to read מ"עא, a Pi'el of the root מ"ע “to minister, to serve,” and by extending its meaning to “worship, adore” translated

I will adore your majesty above the heavens,
With the lips of striplings and sucklings.”
You built a fortress for your habitation,
having silenced your adversaries . . .

He noted, “Before the majesty of God the psalmist can but babble like and infant”—thereby eliminating any real babies being involved in destroying enemies or praising God.

J. Alberto Soggin (1971: 571) followed Dahood (translating “. . . Deine Pracht ich besingen möchte . . stammelnd, wie Kinder und Säugling!”) and further isolated the infants of 8:3a from the bulwark/strength of 8:3b by putting his translation of the last seven Hebrew words of 8:3 into a separate stanza set off by blank lines from the rest of the text.

Mark Smith (1997: 637) took a essentially the same approach as that of Dahood and Soggin and rendered the MT מ"עא as “let me celebrate,” as though it were מ"עא. He translated Psa 8:2 as “Let me celebrate your splendor over the heavens. From the mouth of suckling babes you established a strong place. For your stronghold you indeed ended
the avenging enemy.”

However, despite the agreement of Smith and Soggin with Dahood’s changing the MT יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים, another interpretation is available. First, the relative pronoun יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים refers back to “Yahweh our Lord,” not to the יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים “your majesty” which follows it. Secondly, the verb יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים is the cognate of Arabic verb تن (tanna / tan’a) “he remained, he dwelled” and the noun תָּנִי (tâni?) “resident,” having overtones of being a permanent resident (Lane 2: 318; Wehr 118). This יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים is the participle יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים (= יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים). Thirdly, the MT יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים “your majesty” is not a direct object but an adverbial accusative. With these three points in focus, the corrected יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים means, “[O Yahweh, . . . ] who resides in your majesty above the heavens.”

In summary, both Psalm 7 and Psalm 8 can be clarified once the verb יְהֹוָה הַמָּלָכִים “to dwell” is restored in the lexicons of Biblical Hebrew and two scribal errors are recognized, namely, the error of misplacing five words into Psa 8:3 from Psa 7:6, and the misreading of of the original נְלַע “praise” as נְלַע “strength.” With these correction, Psa 7:6 now reads

Arise, O Yahweh, in your anger,
raise yourself against the fury of my enemies.
Awake, O my God; you decreed judgment
because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

Psa 8:2–3 must have once meant

O Yahweh, our God,
how excellent is your name in all the earth!
Who resides in your majesty above the heavens!
Out of the mouth of babies and infants
you have perfected praise.

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