

ABENEZER G. URGA

Intercession of Jesus in Hebrews

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Mohr Siebeck

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Abeneazer G. Urga

Intercession of Jesus in Hebrews

The Background and Nature of Jesus' Heavenly
Intercession in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Mohr Siebeck

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*Dedicated to my dear wife Jessica and my delightful children Daniel and
Sophia for their patience, compassion, support and love.*

Preface

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ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. Hebrews 7:25

June 2022

Abeneazer G. Urga

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List Of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
<i>AbrN</i>	<i>Abr-Nahrain</i>
AJJS	<i>Australian Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
APOT	<i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i>
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ASE	<i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi</i>
AT	Altes Testament
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the NT</i>
BDB	Brown, Driver, Briggs <i>Hebrew-English Lexicon of the OT</i>
BDF	Blass, Debrunner, Funk <i>Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHGNT	Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNT	Die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments

BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BQ</i>	<i>The Baptist Quarterly</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSB	Berean Study Bible
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BTCP	Biblical Theology for Christian
BTS	Proclamation
	Biblical Tools and Studies
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die
	alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die
	neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CbNT	Commentaire biblique: Nouveau
	Testament
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQM	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph
CC	Concordia Commentary
CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
<i>Did</i>	<i>Didaskalia</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the</i>
	<i>New Testament</i>
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek
	New Testament
<i>EGL and MWBS</i>	<i>Proceedings: Eastern Great Lakes</i>
	<i>and Midwest</i>
	<i>Biblical Societies</i>
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar
	zum Neuen Testament
<i>Enc</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
<i>ERT</i>	<i>Evangelical Review of Theology</i>
<i>EsprVie</i>	<i>Esprit et vie</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Études théologiques et religieuses</i>
EVV	English Versions
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>

<i>FM</i>	<i>Faith and Mission</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filología neotestamentaria</i>
<i>FoiVie</i>	<i>Foi et vie</i>
<i>GCS</i>	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
<i>GNT</i>	Greek New Testament
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
<i>HCOT</i>	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>HNT</i>	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HThKNT</i>	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IKaZ</i>	<i>Internationale katholische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ISV</i>	International Standard Version
<i>IVPNTCS</i>	IVP New Testament Commentary Series
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBTh</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JPS</i>	The Jewish Publication Society
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
<i>Judaica</i>	<i>Judaica: Beiträge zum Verständnis des jüdischen Schicksals in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart</i>
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
<i>KEK</i>	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über

KJV	das Neue Testament King James Version
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
<i>LW</i>	<i>Luther's Works</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MSS/mss	Manuscripts
MT	Masoretic Text
NA ²⁸	Novum Testamentum Graece: Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.
NAC	New American Commentary
NACSBT	New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NCCS	New Covenant Commentary Series
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDNTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology

ONTC	Osborne New Testament Commentaries
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RTL</i>	<i>Revue théologique de Louvain</i>
SB	Subsidia Biblica
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>ScEs</i>	<i>Science et esprit</i>
ScrHier	Scripta hierosolymitana
SCS	Septuagint Commentary Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>SPAW</i>	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin</i>
STL	Second Temple Literature
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
StPB	Studia Post Biblica – Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>SwJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Th</i>	<i>Theologia</i>
<i>THAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>

THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TLNT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VV</i>	<i>Verbum Vitae</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WYC	Wycliffe Bible
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ZNTW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZThK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction and Precedent Research

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In his 1994 essay, “Hebrews in Recent Scholarship,” J. C. McCullough called the Epistle to the Hebrews “the Cinderella of New Testament Scholarship.”¹ In the subsequent decades, as scholars have increasingly turned their attention to this book, its image is changing.² Recent scholarship on Hebrews has focused on Christ’s sacrifice, resurrection, atonement and priesthood. As a result of David M. Moffitt’s *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, the discussion of Christ’s heavenly priesthood and offering has garnered heated discussions among Hebrews scholars.³ Though these discussions focus on the pre-and-post ascension mediatorial role of Jesus, there has been minimal attention paid to “intercession” as the present mediatorial task of Jesus in heaven. Jesus’ heavenly intercession as a High Priest is mainly assumed, but not clearly and adequately connected with his sacrificial death and bodily resurrection and ascension. The focus on death, entry and offering does not culminate into the crown of Jesus’ mediatorial function, that is, intercession. The discussion, unfortunately, appears to cease in midair. In a similar vein, scholarly discussions regarding the background and the nature of Jesus’ intercession, prior to Moffitt’s monograph, were also given scant attention, resulting in the need for an in-depth and fresh examination of this important aspect of Christ’s priesthood.

1.2 Purpose of this Study

This study explores the heavenly intercession of Jesus in Hebrews in order to find out the background and the nature of Jesus’ intercession in heaven as a high priest for believers. The study will help us understand the continual high

¹ J. C. McCullough, “Hebrews in Recent Scholarship,” *IBS* 16 (1994): 66–86, here 66.

² George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews in its First-Century Contexts: Recent Research,” in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, eds. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker/Apollos, 2004), 414–443.

³ David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

priestly task of Jesus Christ in heaven so that we can accurately understand Jesus' heavenly intercession as his primary function as a high priest.

1.3 Research Methodology

In this study, I will examine the background and nature of Jesus' intercession in Hebrews in the broader context of Jesus' mediatorship/priesthood. Hence, I will survey recent scholarship on the priesthood of Jesus and his mediatorial works precisely concerning intercession in the Epistle to the Hebrews. An investigation of intercession as carried out by priests, prophets and angels in the Old Testament, extra-canonical and Second Temple Literature will follow to delineate the portrayal of intercession in the literature and the reasons for intercession. I will also examine Jesus' intercession on earth and in heaven in the Gospels and in the epistles outside of Hebrews. Finally, I will discuss the intercession of Christ in general but also his heavenly intercession, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and I will argue that his heavenly intercession is his primary function as a high priest in heaven.

In this study, I have avoided the typical exegetical examination of "intercession" that centers only on explicit and known lexemes that express the idea of intercession. The investigation here also incorporates concepts, phrases, and ideas that convey the notion of intercession. For this method, Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* has been insightful.⁴ However, Bryan R. Dyer is correct that their work suffers from a lack of "incorporating evidence from LXX, contemporary Greek writers (Philo, Josephus), or even classical writings."⁵ In this study, semantic field is utilized in studying the idea of intercession in Hebrews. Nevertheless, since the author did not write in a vacuum, the LXX, STL and NT outside of Hebrews are incorporated to bring the literary and theological background of intercession in Hebrews to the fore. Doing so will enable us to identify the similarities and differences of intercession between the LXX, STL, NT outside of Hebrews and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here a caveat on methodology is necessary as the discussion on the background of Hebrews is a contentious subject. This study avoids the two extremes that either consider the author of Hebrews as a Philonist (uncritically dependent on STL materials) or as oblivious to his literary, cultural

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), vi–xx.

⁵ Bryan R. Dyer, *Suffering in the Face of Death: The Epistle to the Hebrews and Its Context of Situation*, LNTS 568 (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 52.

and theological milieus (writing his pastoral epistle in a vacuum).⁶ Instead, I contend that the author's primary sources were the OT (LXX proper) and the NT outside of Hebrews, while he was at the same time cognizant of his context in addition to the authoritative texts.⁷

To conclude, the study will employ an inquiry of intercession in scholarly works between 1977–2020, an in-depth exegetical study of relevant biblical texts and an overview of relevant extra-canonical and Second Temple Literature in examining the term “intercession” and its semantic domain to shed light on the term's literary and theological significance in Hebrews.

1.4 Anticipated Contribution

This study will contribute to the ongoing discussion of the Priesthood of Christ by shedding light on the neglected concept of the intercessory role of Christ in heaven. In so doing, the conversation will go one step further, moving from his death, resurrection, and ascension to his primary heavenly role as the interceding High Priest based on his sacrificial-victorious work.

1.5 Questions to be Answered

The study aims to answer one crucial question: What is the background and nature of Jesus' intercession in heaven as a high priest for believers in the Epistle to the Hebrews? In order to answer this question, five key questions will guide the investigation: How are the high priestly/mediatorial intercessions portrayed in the OT and STL? What do the OT and STL suggest as to why priestly intercession is necessary? How does the NT outside of Hebrews present Jesus' high priestly intercession? How is Hebrews' presentation of Jesus' high priestly intercession similar to and different from that of the OT,

⁶ Celsus Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux: I. Commentaire* (Paris: Gabalda, 1952), 39–91; H. W. Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1964); James W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, CBQM 13 (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982), represent the maximalist group that perceives a strong influence of Philo on the author of Hebrews. On the contrary, Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), represents those who have a minimalist view of Philonic influence on Hebrews. Instead, he argues that the Jewish tradition heavily influenced the author of Hebrews.

⁷ The importance of works like Philo in studying Hebrews with a cautionary position is represented by Harold W. Attridge, “Heard Because of His Reverence (Heb 5:7),” *JBL* 98/1 (1979): 90–93; Ronald H. Nash, “The Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *WTJ* 40 (1977): 89–115.

STL and the rest of the NT? What does a grasp of Jesus' heavenly intercession contribute to accurately understanding the primary function of Jesus in heaven as a high priest?

1.6 Precedent Research

1.6.1 Introduction

In 1991, John M. Scholer observed that the Priesthood of Christ was the dominant topic among Hebrews' scholars.⁸ The priesthood motif has never been on the decline. Recent scholarly output proves this fact. However, many of the recent works mainly focus on the death, entry and offering of Christ while overlooking the vital function of Christ in heaven: intercession.⁹ Indeed, the notion of intercession is not entirely absent in the scholarly discussion. In 2004, Howard Griffith provided a full-orbed explication of the motif in his dissertation.¹⁰ Yet even his discussion is confined to the understanding of intercession among five prominent Reformed theologians and his critical evaluation of their perspectives on the topic. Nicholas Moore and David Moffitt provide the most recent discussion on Jesus' intercession in Hebrews.¹¹ Their essays, however, either confine the background of Jesus' heavenly intercession in Hebrews to Leviticus to the neglect of other OT mediators' intercessions as possible background or deny the Day of Atonement as a background for the discourse of intercession in Hebrews, as is the case with

⁸ John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 9.

⁹ Moffitt, Atonement; R. B. Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself? A Taxonomy of Recent Scholarship on Hebrews," *CurBR* 15 (2017): 338–368; Michael Kibbe, "Is It Finished? When Did It Start? Hebrews, Priesthood, and Atonement in Biblical, Systematic, and Historical Perspective," *JTS* 65 (2014): 25–61; Benjamin J. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, BZNW 222 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016).

¹⁰ Howard Griffith, "Priest in Heaven: The Intercession of the Exalted Christ in Reformed Theology, Analysis and Critique" (PhD diss. Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004).

¹¹ David M. Moffitt, "It is Not Finished: Jesus's Perpetual Atoning Work as the Heavenly High Priest in Hebrews," in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue of the Atonement in Hebrews*, eds. Jon C. Laansma, George H. Guthrie and Cynthia Long Westfall, LNTS 516 (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2019), 156–175; David M. Moffitt, "Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative: Distinguishing between Jesus' Inauguration and Maintenance of the New Covenant in Hebrews," in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, eds. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce and Francis Watson, LNTS 565 (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2017), 153–171; Nicholas J. Moore, "Sacrifice, Session and Intercession: The End of Christ's Offering in Hebrews," *JSNT* 42/4 (2020): 521–541; David M. Moffitt, "Jesus as Interceding High Priest and Sacrifice in Hebrews: A Response to Nicholas Moore," *JSNT* 42/4 (2020): 542–552.

Moore. Moreover, although he notes that intercession is implicitly present in Leviticus, Moffitt fails to see the clear evidence for explicit high priestly intercession on the Day of Atonement. Major commentaries on Hebrews and a few important articles indeed deal with the motif – albeit briefly and not comprehensively. As such, their understanding of Christ’s intercession will be delineated in this study. This study will incorporate notable works related to Jesus’ (high) priesthood and his intercessory role published between 1977–2020. The argument of each work will be presented and assessed in order to place this study at the table where the conversation has already begun.

1.6.2 From Philip E. Hughes to David M. Moffitt (1977–2020)

Philip E. Hughes. In his discussion of intercession, Philip E. Hughes notes in his 1977 Hebrews commentary that Christ is the inimitable mediator and is the intercessor *par excellence* in contrast to angelic intercession.¹² Hughes argues that Christ’s intercession is based on his death and offering on the cross and that the sacrificial function of his priestly ministry was concluded at Calvary.¹³

As such, Hughes insists that the cross is the epicenter of Christ’s priesthood as opposed to preparation for Christ’s heavenly functions. Christ’s finished work on the cross is followed by his session at the right hand of God. Therefore, there is no more perpetual sacrificial offering as was true of the ineffective Levitical priestly work. Hughes argues against those who propose perpetual offering and intercession as Christ’s heavenly function. He states that Christ’s continual intercession is based on his once-for-all sacrifice on the cross. Thus, Christ’s intercession is by mere appearance on our behalf before God. Hughes posits that “intercession” in 7:25 and “appearance” in 9:24 convey a similar notion. He reiterates that Christ does not plead a sacrifice but just sits at God’s right hand and claims the result of his work on the cross. Hughes provides three major functions of Christ in heaven: representation, benediction, and intercession.

Hughes’ support for the function of “representation” in heaven is Hebrews 9:24. As noted earlier, however, he argues that “intercession” and “appearance” communicate the same concept. Thus, representation should be subsumed under intercession. When Christ intercedes on our behalf, he is carrying out his representational/mediatorial task in heaven. Hughes postulates that Christ’s heavenly intercession and the Spirit’s earthly intercession are geared toward “bringing many sons to glory” (2:10).¹⁴

Hughes points out that the notion of high priestly intercession is clearly seen “in the prescriptions for sacerdotal garments which Aaron was to wear”

¹² Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 270.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 346.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 351.

(Exod 28:6f.).¹⁵ The garment wearing symbolizes that the people are represented and remembered through the high priest's actions. The better high priest, nevertheless, delivers more effective and infallible intercession. Hughes also asserts that Christ's intercessory role is unique and no angel or saint can replace this heavenly priestly function.

For Hughes, what necessitates intercession is the pilgrims' already-but-not-yet state of salvation. In this life, the believer is yet to complete his or her journey. It is at this juncture that Christ's intercessory function plays a significant role in assisting the believer to overcome "sin and imperfection."¹⁶ Hughes' helpful discussion of intercession does not do justice to the meaning of the term *ἐντυγχάνω*, as he inclines to understand intercession to mean "presence." He repeatedly asserts that it does not mean "pleading." His definition is influenced by his attempt to fend off those who devalue the centrality of the cross and the once-for-all redemptive sacrifice of Christ. As a result, he obscures the meaning of the term. He also does not provide a single piece of evidence to indicate that intercession means presence.

It is vital to answer whether *ἐντυγχάνω* has ever been understood as presence in the NT, LXX, STL or classical literature. It appears that Hughes' definition of intercession is also influenced by the symbolic prescription of the names of the twelve tribes on Aaron's breastplate. But could the author's concept of intercession and its meaning be informed by the intercession of mediators as delineated in the LXX and the STL?

Ronald H. Nash. In the "Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews," Ronald H. Nash presents Jesus' mediatorship against the backdrop of Alexandrian Judaism. Nash attempts to hold a middle ground between Celsus Spicq and Ronald Williamson.¹⁷ Nash ably delineates

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 383.

¹⁷ Nash, "The Notion of Mediator," 91–92. Celsus Spicq, "Le philonisme de L'Épître aux Hébreux," *RB* 56 (1949): 524–572, here 542, notes that Grotius is the first scholar to point out the Philonic influence on Hebrews in 1644: "...Philonem quem legisse videteur hic scriptor." Later, in agreement with his predecessor, E. Ménégoz, Spicq argues: "Au total, nous souscrivons à la formule de Ménégoz: '[l'auteur de épître] est un philonien converti au christianisme,'" Spicq, *Hébreux*, 1:91. Also, Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 8–9, argues in a similar line with that of E. Ménégoz and Celsus Spicq. For more discussion on Spicq's proposal, see J. C. McCullough, "Some Recent Development in Research on the Epistle to the Hebrews," *IBS* 2 (1980): 141–165, here 143–145; McCullough, "Hebrews in Recent Scholarship," 73–74; cf. Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 45–48; Guthrie, "Hebrews in its First-Century Contexts," 427–429.

On the contrary, Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 579, argues that "The Writer of Hebrews had never been a Philonist, had never read Philo's works, had never come under the influence of Philo directly or indirectly." Similarly, L. D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*,

the similarities and differences between the Hellenistic mediators and Jesus' mediatorship in Hebrews. He observes a similarity between Hebrews' implicit and Alexandrian Judaism's explicit use of Wisdom and Logos Christology.¹⁸ Observing the comparison of Jesus with the angels, Moses, Melchizedek and the Aaronic priesthood, Nash surmises that the purpose of the epistle is to present Jesus as the better mediator *vis-à-vis* "the assorted mediators of Alexandrian Judaism."¹⁹ Though Hebrews comprises some aspects of Alexandrian mediatorship, Nash posits that Hebrews also contains concepts that clash with a Platonic understanding of mediatorship; for instance, Hebrews presents Jesus not as an abstract mediator "*but [as] a specific individual historical person*"²⁰ who was a fully incarnate man. Jesus is also portrayed as the mediator who sympathizes with his brothers because he himself knows temptation, suffering, and even death.

Nash is on point when he indicates the purpose of Hebrews: to present Jesus as the superior mediator. His article, however, does not address the pinnacle of Jesus' mediatorship: intercession in heaven.

Harold W. Attridge. According to Harold W. Attridge's 1989 Hebrews commentary, Christ the intercessor is reliable and trustworthy.²¹ Attridge argues that "expiation for sin" does not rely on Jesus' heavenly intercession but on his death on behalf of sinners.²² Yet, he acknowledges that some scholars propose a few OT passages that indicate the connection of intercession and expiation.²³ Nevertheless, he contends that expiation and intercession are not conflated in the epistle.²⁴ In an excursus, Attridge delineates pre-Hebrews high priestly Christology. Regarding high priestly intercession, Attridge notes that the Second Temple literature reveals angels as heavenly intercessors who "offer propitiatory bloodless sacrifice for sinners."²⁵

Attridge argues that the high priestly Christology of Hebrews has a complex Jewish basis. As such, there is some similarity between Hebrews' Chris-

SNTSMS 65 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4, cf. 7–42, argues that the author of Hebrews is influenced more by the LXX rather than by Philo when he writes: "The theological locus of Hebrews appears to have been shifted in the direction of Plato and Alexandria before the exegetical work has been undertaken."

¹⁸ Nash, "The Notion of Mediator," 92–99.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 99; cf. 101, 115.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 105, italics original.

²¹ Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 95.

²² *Ibid.*, 96.

²³ *Ibid.*, n. 193; see also, Stanislas Lyonnet, "Expiation et intercession: A propos d'une traduction de S. Jérôme," *Bib* 40 (1959): 885–901; Stanislas Lyonnet and Leopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), 141–146.

²⁴ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 96 n. 193.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

tology and Second Temple Judaism's priestly Messiah. Hebrews' presentation of Christ's intercession and self-sacrifice, however, are missing from the STL's portrayal of the priestly Messiah.

Attridge states that "the immediate sources of Hebrews' Christology are not to be found here [in the STL],"²⁶ nor does he find Philo convincing as the background of Hebrews' high priestly Christology. Philo's discussion of angelic intercession, nonetheless, sheds light on the Jewish understanding of angelic priesthood but even more on Philo's conception of angelic intercession. Thus, there is some similarity between Philo and Hebrews. Attridge suggests that the author of Hebrews gleaned the motif of priesthood from Jewish sources on angelic priesthood and contextualized the concept of priesthood and its functions in his corpus.

Attridge proposes that other New Testament documents could be sources for Hebrews' notion of Christ's priesthood and his functions, but he dismisses them as improbable because the notion already existed outside of the New Testament. He also rejects Isaiah's Suffering Servant as a possible background for Hebrews' portrayal of Jesus' high priesthood. He reiterates that "the traditional high-priest title and the image of the priest as heavenly intercessor are not drawn from the servant complex."²⁷ Attridge also points out that Hebrews shares some similarities with the priestly Christology in the rest of the NT, but Hebrews' priestly Christology stands out. Attridge asserts that though some passages in Hebrews associate Christ's exaltation and his priesthood, he signals that, in Hebrews 4:14–16 for instance, Christ is seen as a high priest on earth. Hence, he observes a tension in this seemingly contradictory conception of Christ's high priesthood. He believes that the tension is a result of the author's appropriation of various traditions. Nevertheless, he notes that any attempt to find out exactly when Jesus became a high priest needs to be cognizant of the question's complexity. Yet, if one is determined to reach a conclusion, Attridge states, the beginning of Christ's high priesthood should be located in "the complex 'moment' in which death and exaltation are combined."²⁸

Attridge comments that "intercession is the primary function of the priest."²⁹ In Hebrews, intercession points to Christ's main task as a high priest in heaven. His intercession is effective because he is a God-Man who prays both for the forgiveness of sins of believers but even more to help believers get through temptation and trials. Christ's entry into the heavenly

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 103; contra Attridge, Abiola Mbamalu, "Jesus the Interceding High Priest: A Fresh Look at Hebrews 7:25," *HTS* 71/1 (2015): 1–6, proposes that both Psalm 110 and the Isaianic Servant Song (52:13–53:12) are the background for the notion of Christ's priesthood in Hebrews.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.

tabernacle and his appearance is in order to intercede and make access to God possible.

Attridge is correct to note that he identifies intercession and self-sacrifice as the two major functions of Christ's priesthood. He is also on point that intercession is the primary task of the priest and by implication that it is the main function of Christ in heaven. Attridge, however, does not address either the background or the nature of Christ's intercession in Hebrews adequately. Could one glean from the intercession of Abraham, Moses and the prophets of the OT and infer the possible nature of Christ's intercession? Attridge's observation helpfully identifies texts from the STL that have some parallels to the priesthood Christology of Hebrews; however, his incorporation of the OT material in his discussion is not satisfying.

Jacques Schlosser. In his article, "La médiation du Christ d'après l'épître aux Hébreux," Jacques Schlosser argues for the centrality of mediation in Hebrews.³⁰ As a mediator, Jesus is a representative of both God and man at the same time. This "double mouvement" is expressed in the term *mesitēs* (μεσίτης). Schlosser's investigation of the term starts with 1 Timothy 2:5, where Jesus is identified as *mesitēs*, which is rendered as "médiateur de Dieu et des hommes."³¹ He notes that *mesitēs* appears only six times in the New Testament, three of which are found in Hebrews (Gal 3:19, 20; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). He argues that "En Ga 3, 19.20 le substantif est utilisé deux fois dans un contexte qui évoque le don de la loi; le médiateur visé n'est sans doute pas Moïse, comme on le pense d'ordinaire, mais un intermédiaire angélique. Dans les quatre autres occurrences, c'est-à-dire dans le texte des Pastorales déjà mentionné (1 Tm 2, 5) et en He 8, 6 ; 9, 15 et 12, 24, *mesitēs* désigne le Christ."³²

Schlosser points out that, according to Oscar Cullmann, the term *mesitēs* is another way of expressing the dominant motif, namely, the priesthood of Christ.³³ The term is employed along with another vital term *diathēkē*

³⁰ Jacques Schlosser, "La médiation du Christ d'après l'épître aux Hébreux," *RSR* 63/3–4 (1989): 169–181.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, "L'importance de ce thème [le thème du sacerdoce du Christ] aux yeux de notre auteur paraît d'emblée être une raison supplémentaire de valoriser le titre de *mesitēs*." In a recent essay Jerome H. Neyrey, "Jesus the Broker in Hebrews: Insights from the Social Sciences," in *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Kevin B. McCrudden (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 145–170, argues that terms like "priest," "mediator," "guarantor," etc., express the notion that Jesus is a broker between God and man by locating Hebrews' mediatorial theme in the socio-historical context of Greco-Roman patron-client relations.

(διαθήκη) which also expresses the “‘alliance’ entre deux partenaires.”³⁴ Schlosser also identifies *egguos* (ἔγγυος) as another variation of *mesitēs*.

Schlosser, nevertheless, asserts that the term *mesitēs* cannot provide a robust theological proposition for “le Christ jouant un rôle actif dans une double direction, selon le mouvement descendant de Dieu aux hommes et selon le mouvement montant des hommes de Dieu.”³⁵ Thus, he proposes that the study of the theme of Christ’s mediation should incorporate a closer examination of the epistle beyond lexical analysis. Schlosser insists that the term *mesitēs* does not express “à savoir celui d’une médiation entre deux parties,” for this is a later theological development.³⁶ He reaches such a conclusion based on the appearance of *mesitēs* with its qualifying term *diathēkē*. Schlosser remarks that the LXX reveals that *diathēkē* does not convey “le contrat établi entre deux parties, l’engagement réciproque de deux partenaires. Il désigne essentiellement la disposition prise unilatéralement, l’établissement d’un ordre ou d’un régime.”³⁷ As such, Schlosser appears to resist the double movement, namely, the movement from man to God.

To this end, the remaining section of Schlosser’s article explicates the double movement of Christ between God and men, and the character of Moses in comparison to Christ. Schlosser states that “Moïse apparaît comme le médiateur par excellence dans le judaïsme contemporain des origines chrétiennes.”³⁸ Yet he also notes that the term mediator is not applied to Moses in the Old Testament nor is the expression “médiateur de l’alliance” in Hebrews. Thus, he concludes that “Moïse n’apparaît que comme relais ou agent de Dieu.”³⁹

Jesus identifies with humanity – he suffered on behalf of sinners – and is able to sympathize and appear before God as their representative. This movement is, according to Schlosser, highlighted by the deployment of the prepositional phrase *διὰ* + genitive. In addition to this phrase, the replacement of the old physical sacrifices with that of spiritual ones (“a sacrifice of praise to God” [Heb 13:15]) points out the efficacious work of Christ.⁴⁰ Jesus also represents God among humanity. He is appointed by God to be a priest, a mediator: “Un individu n’accède pas au sacerdoce par choix ou décision

³⁴ Ibid., 171.

³⁵ Ibid., 170.

³⁶ Ibid., 181, cf. 170.

³⁷ Ibid., 172.

³⁸ Ibid., 175.

³⁹ Ibid., 176.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 179, Schlosser stresses the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ when he writes, “Etant donné que le Christ a atteint la plénitude du sacerdoce et du sacrifice, il ne peut plus y avoir après lui de sacrifices répétitifs et inefficaces de l’ancien genre, de l’ancienne économie.”

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