

## **The Theological Implications for the Phrase ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Hebrews 8:1-2 Regarding Christ's Mediatorial Work**

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### **Abstract**

The thesis of this article asserts that the theological implication for Jesus' enthronement on the right-hand side of the throne of the Majesty in heaven entails that He sat as Priest-King in the holy place(s) to establish a new covenant. This article evaluates four viewpoints regarding the theological implications of the phrase ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in the unit Hebrews 8:1-6 with regards to Jesus Christ's heavenly work. One school of thought suggests that on the right hand of the throne of the majesty means the beginning of the day of atonement, and Jesus became the High Priest. The other viewpoint argues that on the right hand of the throne, Jesus became Priest-King, like Melchizedek, and established the new covenant. On the other hand, one viewpoint asserts that on the right hand of the throne of the majesty means that Jesus sat down because He finished His work of salvation, while the last view holds that Jesus sat on the right hand as a place of honour, with no reference to space. To arrive at the desired conclusion, this article uses a historical-grammatical method to evaluate existing views. This article follows a framework which analyzes contextual (literary and historical), linguistic, and intratextuality analysis to address the thesis statement.

**Keywords:** High priest, the throne of the majesty, on (the) right hand, He sat, minister, the new covenant.

### **Introduction**

The study aim is to critically analyze the theological weaknesses and strengths of four viewpoints regarding the

implications of the phrase “ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης”<sup>1</sup> concerning Jesus Christ’s ministry in Hebrews chapter 8:1-2, in its section (Hebrews 8:1-6) in the larger unit Hebrews 1:1-10:18.<sup>2</sup>

The thesis of this article attests that the theological implication for Jesus’ enthronement on (the) right-hand side of the throne of the Majesty in heaven entails that Christ sat as Priest-King in the holy place(s) to establish a new covenant. The diverse views include the following: (1) at (the) right-hand side indicates the beginning of the day of atonement,<sup>3</sup> and Jesus became the High Priest.<sup>4</sup> (2) At (the) right-hand side implies that Jesus became the Priest-King, like the Melchizedekian order,<sup>5</sup> with the establishment of the new covenant as the purpose.<sup>6</sup> (3) At the right-hand side is indicative of Jesus having completed the work of salvation<sup>7</sup> and got glorified.<sup>8</sup> (4) At (the) right-hand side means that Jesus took the place of honour

<sup>1</sup> This phrase in all its references in this article is based on the Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece (BNT)*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), BibleWorks. v.9.

<sup>2</sup> Other scholars who support this unit scope are James W. Thompson, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (EDB)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. “Epistle to the Hebrews, Literary Genre Content Structure Authorship Intended Audience.” Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 465.

<sup>3</sup> Albion F. Ballenger, *Cast out for the Cross of Christ* (Tropico, CA: Pacific Press, 1909), 7, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament 2nd*, Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 651.

<sup>6</sup> Jon C. Laansma, “The Book of Hebrew,” *Dictionary for Theological Interpretations of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 2005), 280.

<sup>7</sup> B. W. Johnson, *The People’s New Testament*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Altamonte Springs: FL: OakTree Software, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Understanding the Bible*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

without reference to space.<sup>9</sup> This view assumes that the right-hand side symbolises power and the place of honour without intending literality.<sup>10</sup> These diverse views justify examining the phrase to enrich theologians, biblical scholars, and readers by establishing a biblically probable and plausible view.

This study adopts a historical-grammatical approach emphasising contextual, structural, and linguistic analysis.

It also investigates the intratextuality of the phrase and synthesises its findings, conclusions, and reflections. However, other theological implications, such as the eschatological, liturgical, and pastoral dimensions, are outside the scope of this study. Two research questions guide this study. (1) How does the contextual analysis help in understanding the theological implication of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Hebrews 8:1? (2) How does linguistic study (semantics, grammar, structure, and syntax) elucidate the implications of the phrase under study? A contextual analysis follows to answer Question 1.

### Contextual Analysis

Understanding literary and historical contexts leads to a clearer understanding of the author's usage and significance of the expression ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης and its theological implications. This article operates on the premise that each language's word meanings are embedded in its culture and understanding them is vital.<sup>11</sup> One case is the historical background, as discussed below. This section analyzes the term

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<sup>9</sup> L. D. Bevan, "The Exaltation of Christ," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, ed. James Orr, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1915).

<sup>10</sup> Gregory A. Wolfe, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, Accordance electronic edition [CR ROM] (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. "Right Hand."

<sup>11</sup> Dana M. Harris, *An Introduction to Biblical Greek Grammar: Elementary Syntax and Linguistics*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 3.

Hebrews, emphasising its influence on understanding the phrase under review.

### **The Historical Context of the Term Hebrews and its Influence to the Theological Sense of ἐνΔεξιᾷ τοῦ Θρόνου τῆς Μεγαλωσύνης**

To address the theological implications of the phrase, we must understand the term Hebrews in its historical context. The usage of the word Hebrew or Hebrews is a shared referral to Abraham<sup>12</sup> and the descendants from the lineage of Jacob in the Hebrew text.<sup>13</sup> The term, as used around the second temple period, applied to ethnic Jews (Sibylline 1:387)<sup>14</sup> as a race (Flight 1:168),<sup>15</sup> in contrast to other nationalities (Antiquities 2:315).<sup>16</sup> The term can accommodate the meanings of both Jewish language and the people.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Sara Mandell mentions that the term may include non-Jewish people as it is non-ethnic,<sup>18</sup> though maintaining that contrast between the Israelites and nations may be intended in the use of the term.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, ed., *The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), s.v. "Hebrew."

<sup>13</sup> James D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney eds., *NIV Bible Dictionary* (NIVD), Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> *The Pseudepigrapha English*, trans., Craig A. Evans, Danny Zacharias, Matt Walsh, and Scott Kohler, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Wolfville, Nova Scotia: Acadia Divinity College, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> *The Works of Philo, Completed and Unabridged*, trans., Charles D. Yonge, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Sara Mandell, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. "Hebrew, Hebrews."

<sup>17</sup> Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (TWDTT), (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), s.v. "Hebrew."

<sup>18</sup> Mandell, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Hebrew, Hebrews."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Additionally, the word's use in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 6:1; Phil 3:5; 2 Cor 11:22) applied to ethnic Jewish believers in Christ.<sup>20</sup> Mathew G. Easton adds that contrast is envisaged in using the word in the New Testament.<sup>21</sup> Church historian Eusebius used it for Jews and Hebrew race synonymously (2Eusebius 17:2).<sup>22</sup> Thus, this research observes that Hebrews consistently refers to Israelites and their language. This analysis subscribes to the meanings found in the Hebrew text, second temple period works, New Testament scriptures, and church fathers' works, applying it to ethnic Israelites or Jewish people by birth and language; thus, the focus in this study is not language but the people.

For the Hebrew people during second temple period, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης has a theological sense of both royal (Antiquities 8:7) and priestly imagery<sup>23</sup> (cf. Hebrews 1:3, 8:1; Psalm 110:1, 4). In the Qumran circles, the expected prophet-like Moses with both priestly and kingly attributes was deemed the anointed one (Messiah).<sup>24</sup> The expected Messiah would be a righteous king<sup>25</sup> of the Davidic branch,<sup>26</sup> and Messiah of Aaron and Israel, who would make atonement for sin.<sup>27</sup> For Hebrew

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<sup>20</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Accordance electronic edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), s.v. "The Letter to the Hebrews."

<sup>21</sup> Matthew G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary (EBD)* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (London: Thomas Nelson, 1897), s.v. "Hebrew." 3410

<sup>22</sup> Rex A. Koivisto, ed., *Eusebius English: Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Portland, OR: Multnomah University, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> L. W. Hurtado, *DLNTD*, s.v. "Christology."

<sup>24</sup> H. L. Ellison, *NIDCC*, s.v. "Messiah."

<sup>25</sup> Psalm of Solomon 17:32

<sup>26</sup> 4Q252 5:3

<sup>27</sup> *Qumran Non-biblical Manuscripts: A New English Translation: Based upon the book "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New English Translation,"* ed., Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, Jr. and Edward M. Cook rev., 2005, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, revised 2009).

Christians, the usage of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Hebrews 8:1 recalls Psalm 110:1, 4 where Lord and priest titles are applied to Jesus Christ. Thus, the enthronement of Christ in 8:1 as the Messiah Priest/king in His heavenly ministry is likely in view. This is reminiscent of a Jewish expectation of such a Messiah (cf. Zechariah 6:11-13; Psalm 110).<sup>28</sup> The following section addresses the provenance of the Hebrew Church in relation to its influence on the meaning of the phrase under review.

### **Location of the Hebrew Church and its Influence to the Theological Sense of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θρόνου τῆς Μεγαλωσύνης**

This paper suggests that the sense of the expression ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in relation to the Hebrews as mentioned above, should be viewed in relation to a specific location as first century Jews lived in both Jerusalem<sup>29</sup> and diaspora (3Eusebius 4:2).<sup>30</sup> One view suggests it was meant for Jewish Christians in Rome (Heb 13:34), as technical terms like τῶν ἡγουμένων “of the rulers,” τοῖς ἡγουμένοις “to the rulers,” and τοὺς ἡγουμένους “the rulers” (Heb 13:7, 17, 24) resemble the term προηγούμενοι, “leading ones” used by Hermas and Clement of Rome (1 Clement 1:3; 21:6; Shepherd of Hermas 9:7).<sup>31</sup> However, Murray J. Harris<sup>32</sup> and E. Goodrich Smith<sup>33</sup> subscribe to the Roman origin view. Nevertheless, Eusebius points out that until the fourth century, the Roman Church rejected Hebrews as having non-Pauline

<sup>28</sup> Craig A. Evans, David Mishkin, Eitan Bar, eds., *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Accordance electronic ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2019), 12.

<sup>29</sup> Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Epistle to Hebrews.”

<sup>30</sup> Koivisto, ed., *Eusebius English: Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*,

<sup>31</sup> Douglas and Tenney eds., *NIV Bible Dictionary (NIVD)*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM],

<sup>32</sup> Murray J. Harris, “The Translation and Significance of ὁ θεός In Hebrew 1:8-9,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 36, no. 1 (May 1 1985): 128.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, “Was Peter in Rome, And Bishop of the Church at Rome”? (July 1858): 601.

characteristics (3Eusebius, 3:5).<sup>34</sup> H. Gamble also supports the report by Eusebius.<sup>35</sup>

Easton maintains that the recipients were Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan assert that Palestinian or Syrian Jewish believers are in view, not Jewish believers in Italy.<sup>37</sup> Contrawise, J. M. Knight argues for a mixed community.<sup>38</sup> This research attests that the book of Acts confirms the co-existence of Judean Hebrews and Hellenised Hebrews in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1).<sup>39</sup>

Craig Keener adds that Palestinian Jewish Believers depended more on the temple before its destruction, and Hebrews suggests the presence of the earthly priesthood and rituals<sup>40</sup> (Heb 8:4, 5).

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<sup>34</sup> Rex A. Koivisto, ed., *Eusebius English: Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Portland, OR: Multnomah University, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> H. Gamble, *Dictionary of New Testament Background (DNTB)*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2000), s.v. "Canonical Formation of the New Testament."

<sup>36</sup> Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Epistle to Hebrews."

<sup>37</sup> Metzger and Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, s.v. "The Letter to the Hebrews."

<sup>38</sup> J. M. Knight, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Development (DLNTD)*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 1997), s.v. "Alexandria, Alexandrian Christianity."

<sup>39</sup> Joel B. Green, ed., *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 65.

<sup>40</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 651.

Furthermore, this research suggests that the presence of the phrase “Προς Ἑβραίους to Hebrews” in papyrus P46<sup>41</sup> (ca AD 200)<sup>42</sup> as the title is indicative of an early recognition of this designation.<sup>43</sup> This paper advocates that the phrase *ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΙΤΑΛΙΑΣ*<sup>44</sup> “from Italy” as found in P46 and supported in Nestle Aland Greek text, suggests Italy as the origin of Hebrews. Easton also shares this view.<sup>45</sup> The preposition ἀπό with a genitive of place marks source or origin; hence,<sup>46</sup> the sense “from Italy” is plausible. This analysis supports the appellation and provenance of Hebrews, as they are explicitly attested in cited second-century papyri. Eusebius confirms that until Emperor Adrian’s invasion of Jerusalem, the church was led by bishops of Hebrew descent, and the entire church consisted of Hebrew believers (4Eusebius 5:2).<sup>47</sup>

This study argues for Italian origin over the Italian destination. It affirms Palestinian Hebrews, not Roman-based Hebrews, based on historical usage and internal textual evidence. Other academics hold the view<sup>48</sup> that the epistle existed before the destruction of

<sup>41</sup> Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, Accordance electronic edition (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 693.

<sup>42</sup> Bill Warren, ed., *The Center for New Testament Textual Studies New Testament Critical Apparatus*, Accordance electronic ed. (New Orleans, LA: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), para. 575900.

<sup>43</sup> Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 465.

<sup>44</sup> Rex A. Koivisto, *Greek New Testament Papyri-Canonical Order*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barret Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Portland, OR: Multnomah University, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Epistle to Hebrews.”

<sup>46</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., rev. and ed. Fredrick William Danker, Accordance electronic edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “ἀπό.”

<sup>47</sup> Koivisto, ed., *Eusebius English: Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*,

<sup>48</sup> Metzger and Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, s.v. “The Letter to the Hebrews.”



the Jerusalem temple.<sup>49</sup> Besides, Palestinian Hebrews expected a Messiah with royal attributes akin to David who would fulfil divine justice (Sibylline 2:243); consequently, priest-king duties reminiscent of David are likely in focus.<sup>50</sup> Thus, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Palestine Second Temple period carries both lordship and priesthood theological connotations (cf. Psalm 110:1, 4). Dead Sea Scrolls also provide evidence of the expectation of a Messiah of Aaron and Israel (priest/king) in the Messianic age.<sup>51</sup> The amalgamation of these roles into a single figure in Hebrews 8:1 demonstrates the influence of Jewish messianic concepts among early Christians, who interpreted this in the context of Jesus Christ's celestial ministry.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, this paper observes that the internal evidence theme of the Son's exaltation supported by structure, such as 1:1, demonstrates that the Son is an appointed heir (royal imagery), while verse 3 indicates that the Son sat on the right-hand side of the throne after purifying sin (priestly imagery). In 1:8, the Son possesses a throne (king), whereas in 4:14, He is a high priest in heaven. In chapter 5:6-9, the Son holds the Melchizedekian priesthood (King/priest). Chapters 6:19 and 7:15-17 show His priesthood is eternal.

Chapter 7:22-25 reveals that He is a priest forever by oath, in a superior covenant and makes intercession, while 7:28 combines sonship (king) and priesthood, culminating in 8:1. The next section discusses social context and its influence on the theological sense of the phrase.

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<sup>49</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament*, 651.

<sup>50</sup> Craig A. Evans, David Mishkin, Eitan Bar, eds., *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Accordance electronic ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2019), 58.

<sup>51</sup> *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, eds. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman, Accordance electronic edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 28.

<sup>52</sup> Brad Embry, Ronald Herms, and Archie T. Wright, eds., *Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology* vol. 1 of Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 497.

### **The Social Setting and its influence on the Theological Sense of ἐν Δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θρόνου τῆς Μεγαλωσύνης**

Based on the above discussions, the phrase ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης favours the Palestinian Jewish or Ancient Near East social setting. This phrase implies a position of honour and authority.<sup>53</sup> In Oriental, the right-hand position of the person on the throne was the most important.<sup>54</sup> From a cultural perspective, Jesus Christ, sitting on God's right-hand side, signifies honour and authority. However, this study notes that Hebrews 8:1 goes beyond cultural focus as the author envisions a heavenly sanctuary and universal rule.

On the other hand, the right-hand side has administrative implications beyond its social importance (1 Kings 2:19-20). This paper observes that similar to the significance of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου in the social context regarding the exaltedness of one who sat on that position, it has theological implications for understanding Jesus Christ's exalted office in the heavenly sanctuary as both the Son on the right-hand side of the throne and priest in 8:1, similar to Hebrews 1:1, 3 (cf. Son the appointed heir-royal imagery 1:1; priestly imagery 1:3 after purifying sin). The following section addresses the political significance of sitting on the right-hand side in relation to its theological influence on the phrase's meaning in Hebrews.

### **Political Context of ἐν Δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θρόνου τῆς Μεγαλωσύνης**

Politically, a person sitting on (the) right-hand side was accredited with great influence, power, and nobility, suggesting a co-regency with the ruling king.<sup>55</sup> When the son assumed this position, it demonstrated heirship and establishment to the throne

<sup>53</sup> Wolfe, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* [CD ROM],

<sup>54</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 155.

<sup>55</sup> Glen H. Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians, Exegetical Summary Series*, Accordance electronic edition (Dallas: SIL International, 1997), 89.

(1Kings 1:35).<sup>56</sup> George E. Ladd attests that Jesus as the Son shares Godship, throne, and honour with the Father.<sup>57</sup> On the right-hand side of the Majesty's throne indicates having a worldwide rule.<sup>58</sup> It is the state of preeminence over every principalities.<sup>59</sup> Herbert W. Bateman observes that in the Ancient Near East, a king sitting on the right-hand side of the throne of god/God symbolises the king's honoured position and divine right to rule.<sup>60</sup> The political custom of honoured<sup>61</sup> people sitting on the right hand of the king is attested in Egyptian (Antiquities 12:96)<sup>62</sup> and Palestinian (Antiquities 6:235)<sup>63</sup> cultures (2 Kings 2:19; Psalms 45:9).

In addition, the second temple period's expectations of a Messiah-righteous king of Davidic origin,<sup>64</sup> who would also be a priest, are well-attested.<sup>65</sup>

From a political standpoint, this study postulates that the right-hand side as a position of co-regency and installation implies that Jesus Christ shares universal dominance with the Father (cf. 1:1, 3). This context influences Christ's kingship in 8:1. In Hebrews

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>57</sup> George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev., edition, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 624.

<sup>58</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 324.

<sup>59</sup> Stott, *Understanding the Bible*.

<sup>60</sup> Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis, ed. John D. Harvey, Accordance electronic edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013), 125.

<sup>61</sup> Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), s.v. "יָדָיִ.".

<sup>62</sup> *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Complete and Unabridged, trans. William Whiston, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Psalm of Solomon 17:32.

<sup>65</sup> CD 12:23; 20:1.

8:1-6, Jesus shares universal royal power and priestly duties on God's right-hand side. Verse 1 states that Jesus is a high priest while on the throne. In the construction ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης (8:1), ἀρχιερέα shows He holds a priestly office, while ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ in accordance with the political setting shows royal office; thus, holding both duties. Having considered the political context, the literary context is next to elucidate its influence on the phrase under review.

### **Literary Setting of the Unit Hebrews 1:1-10:18**

This section analyzes the broader structural setting of Hebrews 8:1-6. The literary context of the discourse segment and pericope is relevant to exploring the phrase's theological implications. Gareth Lee Cockerill notes that literary indicators for structural divisions of the unit are challenging; thus, content should be the basis.<sup>66</sup> One view suggests that the pericope belongs to Hebrews 8:1-10:18, which has three subsections: 8:1-6 (Introduction), 8:7–13, 9:15–22, and 10:11–18.<sup>67</sup>

Another view suggests that Hebrews 8:1-6 belong to the larger unit, Hebrews 8:1–9:28.<sup>68</sup> Other scholars see Hebrews 8:1-6 as belonging to the larger unit Hebrews 7:1-10:18.<sup>69</sup> Another view suggests three larger units in Hebrews: “God’s Son” (1:1–6:20), “Christ’s Work” (7:1–10:18) and “Our Response” (10:19–13:25).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Gareth Lee Cockerill, “Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews 8:1-10:18: A Symphony in Three Movements,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11, no. 2 (2001): 181.

<sup>67</sup> Matthias Henze and David Lincicum, eds., *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2023), 664-665.

<sup>68</sup> Harold J. Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews*, Exegetical Summary Series, Accordance electronic ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 1998), 264.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews*, UBS Translator's Handbooks, Accordance electronic ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), para. 50931

<sup>70</sup> William L. Kynes, “Book Reviews,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological* 25, no. 3 (September 1982): 382.

John Niemelä suggests two larger units for the whole book “(1:1–10:18 as doctrine and 10:19–13:25 as exhortation)”<sup>71</sup> James A. Townsend indicates that Hebrews 8:1-6 belongs to the larger unit Hebrews 1:1-10:18.<sup>72</sup>

This study favours a thematically based discourse unit over a structural one, supporting Cockerill’s view. It adopts this position due to the scope of Jesus Christ’s preeminence theme. This includes His role as Son-heir/priest on (the) right-hand side, commencing in chapters 1:1-3, 8; as Son/High Priest in heaven 4:14; as exalted Son/High Priest in the Melchizedekian order (priest/king) 5:5-8, 6:19, 7:15; the preeminence and permanence of His Priesthood as intercessor of the superior covenant 7:22-25; and the preeminence of His appointment method as Son/High Priest 7:28. This theme culminates in chapter 8:1-6, serving as a primary point indicating that Jesus Christ in heaven is Priest King.

This thematic context supports interpreting the theological sense of the phrase τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης as installation to be “priest/king” regarding Jesus’ heavenly ministry and new covenant ratifications, ending in chapter 10:18. James W. Thompson espouses this comparable position.<sup>73</sup>

Consequently, the study attests that views seeing the right hand as indicating Jesus Christ merely sitting after finishing redemption and commencing atonement seem to ignore literary themes inherent in the larger discourse unit. After considering the broader structural setting, the pericope’s literary structure is examined to decipher its influence on the phrase’s meaning.

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<sup>71</sup> John Niemelä, “No More Sacrifice part 1 of 2,” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 4, no. 4 (October 1998): 15.

<sup>72</sup> James A. Townsend, “A Structural Synthesis of the Book of Hebrews,” *The Emmaus* 9, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 95.

<sup>73</sup> James W. Thompson, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (EDB)*, ed. David N. Freedman (N.P.: Wm. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. “Hebrews, Epistle to the Literary Genre Content Structure Authorship Intended Audience.” 569.

## Pericope Context and Literary Structure (Hebrews 8:1-6)

Chapter 8 has two subthemes: the sanctuary in heaven with Jesus Christ as High Priest (8:1-6) and details on the new covenant (8:7-13).<sup>74</sup> This follows the unit on the Priesthood of Melchizedek, Aaron, and Jesus (Heb 7:1-28).<sup>75</sup> This article notes that Hebrews 8:1-6 mirrors the previous subunit of Hebrews 7:20-28,<sup>76</sup> in which Jesus' high priesthood as the Son is founded by promise after Melchizedek's order<sup>77</sup> as a substitute to Aaron's priesthood (7:11-17).<sup>78</sup> The pericope immediately following 8:1-6 is 8:7-11,<sup>79</sup> and demonstrates that Jesus Christ's heavenly High Priesthood nullified the earlier covenant by His death and founded the new covenant (Heb 9:18). Frank B. Holbrook supports the breakdown of chapter 8 into two sections (8:1-6; 8:7-13).<sup>80</sup> Henry A. Sawtelle likewise advocates a similar position.<sup>81</sup> Other scholars affirm that 8:1-6 is the introduction<sup>82</sup> to the new unit.

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<sup>74</sup> James Moffatt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, ed. Samuel Rolles Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles A. Briggs, Accordance electronic ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1924), para. 33148.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1894), 7.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 369-370.

<sup>77</sup> Murray, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, vol. 4 of Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Accordance electronic ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 2-3.

<sup>79</sup> Henze and Lincicum, eds., *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings*, 664-665.

<sup>80</sup> Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> Henry A. Sawtelle, "The Eternal Life and Priesthood of Melchisedek," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 16, no. 63 (July 1859): 533.

<sup>82</sup> Henze and Lincicum, eds., *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings*, 664-665.

This analysis notes that Melchizedek priesthood and new covenant inauguration are in view in Hebrews 5, 7 and 8-10 respectively. The comparison between Jesus' eternal priesthood as the Son in Heaven 5:5-6, 8-10; 6:19; 7:11, 15-17 and Melchizedek shows that the focus is on similarities of king/priest roles, not location. The focus is a universal eternal heavenly priesthood 7:22-24; 8:1 in a better covenant making intercession for all humanity forever 7:25, 28. Contrasting Jesus' priesthood to Aaron's shows that the focus is not on the Aaronic model of the earthly sanctuary, but heavenly (see 7:11-15; 8:1). Thus, Aaronic priesthood and its earthly rituals, such as the day of atonement, appear remote, because Jesus' high priesthood differs from the Aaronic one.<sup>83</sup> Besides, there is no mention of the day of atonement concerning the Melchizedek priesthood in all Hebrew Text references (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4), which is the basis for New Testament citations (Hebrews 7:17; 8:1).<sup>84</sup>

Gareth Lee Cockerill asserts that 8:1 transitions to the pericope unit under review, with 10:19 as the boundary.<sup>85</sup>

This paper observes that the literary limits for the pericope under review are set by the Greek phrases Κεφάλαιον δὲ and νυν[ι] δὲ<sup>86</sup> respectively (8:1, 6). Δὲ signals the beginning of a new sentence or its end.<sup>87</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger likewise sees 8:1 as a transition.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, this paper postulates that in verse 1 δὲ serves as a

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<sup>83</sup> Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, et al, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (DBI)*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 1998), s.v. "Images of Christ."

<sup>84</sup> Gerald M. Bilkes, "Applying Christ's Supremacy: Learning from Hebrews," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 2, no. 1 (January 2010): 26.

<sup>85</sup> Gareth Lee Cockerill, "Structure and Interpretation in: A Symphony in Three Movements," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11, no. 2 (2001): 180.

<sup>86</sup> Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece (BNT)*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), BibleWorks. v.9.

<sup>87</sup> *CBL*, s.v. "δέ."

<sup>88</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Handbook on Hebrews Through Revelation*, Accordance Electronic edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 34.

transition marker<sup>89</sup> or previous paragraph breaker.<sup>90</sup> In verse 6 δὲ is a marker of resumption<sup>91</sup> to the subject of verse 4 (ἦν, ἦν ἱερεύς) Jesus as high priest, after an explanatory digression in verse 5. Marvin R. Vincent adds that verse 6 reflects verse 4.<sup>92</sup>

In addition, the article reports that, while the language is akin to practices of the Jewish sanctuary,<sup>93</sup> the primary motif of the literary structure is the Son High Priest, who plays a royal role on (the) right-hand side of the throne (verse 1). Verse 2 indicates that His ministry is in the holy place(s) on the right-hand side of God's throne. Verses 3-5 validate the Son's superior role above all earthly priests who served as models, while verse 6 addresses Jesus Christ as the surety with a superior ministry in a superior covenant.

This article observes that the pericope has Jesus as the subject in verses 1 (ὁς, whose antecedent is-ἀρχιερέα), v3 (τοῦτον), v4 (ἦν, ἦν ἱερεύς), v6 (τέτυχεν) with a digression in verse 5 (οἵτινες, Μωϋσῆς) to contrast Jesus' heavenly high priesthood against earthly priests.

This analysis proposes that, as the expression on the right-hand side of the Majesty's throne signifies importance and dominance, Jesus Christ's existence fulfils the kingly priestly roles after the Melchizedekian order in the new covenant. Daniel R. Chadwick shares this view.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Baker and Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, s.v. "δέ."

<sup>90</sup> Christopher J. Fresch, *A Book-by Book Guide to New Testament Greek Vocabulary*, Accordance electronic ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2019), 13.

<sup>91</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "δέ."

<sup>92</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (New York, NY: OakTree Software, 2004), para. 19019.

<sup>93</sup> Annang Asumang and Bill Domeris, "Ministering in the Tabernacle: The Spatiality of the Christology of Hebrews," *Conspectus* 1, no. 1 (March 2006): 3, 19.

<sup>94</sup> Daniel R. Chadwick, "The Extent of the Atonement and Judgment: A Phenomenological Vision 1," *Global Journal of Classical Theology* (n.d): para. 2173.



Based on the pericope's literary structure, this study notes that the view of the day of atonement lacks explicit literary support, as no Aaronic rituals are stated. The view of (the) right hand as the place of honour has support in verse 1, with links to royal power, yet overlooks the priestly role in verse 2. The view of sitting on (the) right hand as completing redemption lacks explicit support, although it may be implied. However, the Son's Priestly and Kingly roles in mediatory work are textually supported (Hebrews 8:1-2, 6). David Peterson, commenting on ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης, proposes that Jesus Christ while occupying the throne fulfills both ruling and priestly functions.<sup>95</sup> Jon C. Laansma asserts that the installation of the better covenant is likely in perspective, with Jesus Christ being the Priest and King<sup>96</sup> similar to Acts 2:33-36.

Consequently, this paper notes that the pericope's literary context follows the immediate unit on the Priesthood of Melchizedek, Aaron, and Jesus (Heb 7:1-28).<sup>97</sup>

Hebrews 8:1-6 mirrors the previous subunit of Hebrews 7:20-28,<sup>98</sup> in which Jesus' high priesthood as the Son is founded by promise after Melchizedek's order<sup>99</sup> as a substitute to Aaron's priesthood (7:11-17).<sup>100</sup> The pericope immediately following 8:1-

<sup>95</sup> David Peterson, and David A Carson eds., *Hebrews, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, Accordance electronic edition (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1338.

<sup>96</sup> Laansma, "The Book of Hebrew," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretations of the Bible*, 280.

<sup>97</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1894), 7.

<sup>98</sup> Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 369-370.

<sup>99</sup> Murray, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, vol. 4 of *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series*, Accordance electronic ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 2-3.

6 is 8:7-11,<sup>101</sup> and demonstrates that Jesus Christ's heavenly High Priesthood nullified the earlier covenant by His death and founded the new covenant (Heb 9:18). The pericope's literary structure shows that the primary motif of the literary structure is the Son High Priest, who plays a royal role on (the) right-hand side of the throne (verse 1; cf. 1:3, 8). Verse 2 indicates that His ministry is in the holy place(s) on the right-hand side of God's throne. Verses 3-5 validate the Son's superior role above all earthly priests who served as models, while verse 6 addresses Jesus Christ as the surety with a superior ministry in a superior covenant.

For this reason, both the literary context and structure confirm the progression of the Son motif as a High priest-king in the order of Melchizedek, clarifying its relation to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης. Following the discussion of the pericope's literary structure, the section below presents a detailed literary analysis. This will cover the role of genre and form, and how they influence the theology of the phrase under discussion.

### **Literary and Linguistic Analysis**

To answer guiding question two, this section examines linguistic issues. These aspects include form, syntax, words, phrases, sentence, unit, and intratextuality. The literary genre and form are presented in the following section.

### **Literary Genre and Form of the Unit**

The genre of Hebrews and the unit form exhibit the quality or appearance of a homily<sup>102</sup> or treatise.<sup>103</sup> By contrast, Herbert W.

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<sup>101</sup> Henze and Lincicum, eds., *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings*, 664-665.

<sup>102</sup> Laansma, "The Book of Hebrew," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretations of the Bible*, 276.

<sup>103</sup> Sherri Brown and Francis J. Moloney, *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction*, Accordance electronic edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019), 184.

Bateman IV,<sup>104</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan indicate that it is an epistle.<sup>105</sup> James W. Thompson objects to Metzger and Coogan's position, citing the lack of an epistolary opening despite a conclusion.<sup>106</sup> Other scholars have advocated for a composite epistle, sermon and treatise genre.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, this article favours the book genre as an epistle, as the designation "to (the) Hebrews" in Papyrus 46 (ca AD 200) shows.

The implication being ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in 8:1 applies to a people whose social, political, and spiritual life relates to the sanctuary services. The Apostolic father Clement of Rome (c.90–100),<sup>108</sup> Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (c.98/117),<sup>109</sup> and Clement of Alexandria (c.155–220)<sup>110</sup> also alluded to it as an epistle to the Hebrews (3Eusebius 38:1–3; 6Eusebius 14:2–4).<sup>111</sup>

This research suggests that the pericope is a doctrinal treatise expounding the themes of the heavenly sanctuary and Jesus Christ's high-priestly work related to the new covenant. Frank B. Holbrook adds that the treatise's language should be taken

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<sup>104</sup> Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters*, 56.

<sup>105</sup> Metzger and Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, s.v. "The Letter to the Hebrews."

<sup>106</sup> James W. Thompson, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. "Epistle to the Hebrews, Literary Genre Content Structure Authorship Intended Audience." 568.

<sup>107</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 465.

<sup>108</sup> D. F. Wright, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (NIDCC)*, ed. James D. Douglas and Earle E. Cairns (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), s.v. "Clement of Rome (c.90–100)," paragraph 3102.

<sup>109</sup> Wright, *NIDCC*, s.v. "Ignatius (d.98/117)."

<sup>110</sup> G. L. Carey, *NIDCC*, s.v. "Clement of Alexandria (c.155–c.220)."

<sup>111</sup> Koivisto, ed., *Eusebius English: Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*,

literally, though idioms may be present.<sup>112</sup> This article agrees with Holbrook, as it aligns with the cultural and political context where ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης is understood in its literal sense. Thus, this paper takes the meaning of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in a literal sense based on the genre and unit form which is neither poetic nor prophetic. After considering the literary genre, the next section deals with word studies to resolve the interpretation of the terms.

### Word study

This section deals with selected words that help to understand the meaning of the phrase under review. Accompanying words in the sentence provide understanding of the implications of terms under study: ἐκάθισεν, ὑποδείγματι, λειτουργός, and ἀρχιερέα. Ἀρχιερέα comes first in the following section.

The Theological Implication of Ἀρχιερέα (High Priest) The term ἀρχιερέα in singular form suggests one person, while its plural assumes a body of ruling priests; thus, one High Priest is in view.<sup>113</sup> Jon C. Laansma mentions that while the text suggests the atonement day of the Jews when one High Priest appeared in God's presence, the plot returns to the daily sacrifice rituals, combining two Jewish offices.<sup>114</sup> This analysis attests that the emphasis lies on Christ's office's superiority over the old cultic life, not on creating a close similarity with the Aaronic priesthood. This study notes that on the typical day of atonement, Aaronic priests never sat on God's mercy seat or throne; hence, the text may not echo the day of atonement. Because the term ἀρχιερέα suggests one Priest in its singular form, while its plural assumes a body of ruling priests; thus, one High

<sup>112</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, vol. 4 of Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Accordance electronic ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 3-4.

<sup>113</sup> William D. Mounce, ed., *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), s.v. "Chief Priest."

<sup>114</sup> Laansma, 280.

Priest is in view.<sup>115</sup> This article attests that, the substantive ἀρχιερέα is singular in relation to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης; so, its theological significance indicates that Christ Jesus holds the equivalent role (high priest) in heaven on (the) right-hand side of the throne of the Majesty. The predicate ἐκάθισεν (he sat) is the next in this analysis to clarify the implication of sitting on the throne.

### The Theological Implication of Ἐκάθισεν (he sat)

The predicate ἐκάθισεν (he sat) has several senses: Among some of its meanings are “to sit down,”<sup>116</sup> appoint,<sup>117</sup> continue<sup>118</sup> or “stay, and install.”<sup>119</sup> This paper maintains that Oriental society commonly recognizes holding a civil office requires sitting on the seat or throne,<sup>120</sup> the predicate in review conveys the sense of sitting down with a view of installation.

This is reminiscent of Psalm 110:1, 4 upon which Hebrew 8:1 builds an analogy.<sup>121</sup> Reflecting on sitting as opposed to standing,

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<sup>115</sup> William D. Mounce, ed, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), s.v. “Chief Priest.”

<sup>116</sup> Michael H. Burer and Jeffrey E. Miller, *A New Reader's Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 26.

<sup>117</sup> James Strong, *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* (Accordance electronic edition: OakTree Software, n.d.), s.v. “καθίζω.”

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Moisés Silva, ed., “Καθίζω,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDNTTE)*, Accordance electronic edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:36.

<sup>120</sup> F. Schröger, “καθίζω,” *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 2:224-225.

<sup>121</sup> Craig A. Evans and David Mishkin, eds., *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Accordance electronic ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2019), 58.

Nelson states that it suggests Jesus Christ's enthronement with ongoing mediation after His self-sacrifice.<sup>122</sup>

This study postulates that the sense of installation is consistent with the discourse textual evidence as observed in the following constructions: In 1:8 πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, "but to the Son, your throne O God is forever,"<sup>123</sup> indicates the Son possesses divine attribute with continuity of the royal office. In 1:9...διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός ὁ θεός σου ἔλαιον... "Because of this, God your God anointed you (with) oil..." displays installation imagery of the Son to kingship. In 7:21...ᾧμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται· σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. "(The) Lord sworn and He shall not change mind: you (are) a priest forever." This indicates that the Son's priesthood was forever by divine oath. In 7:24...τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην, the present infinitive (τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) "he continues to remain forever" shows the continuity of the priesthood, supported by ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην "he holds the priesthood permanently." Chapter 7:28...ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον, confirms installation to the priesthood by oath, and continuity of results depicted by the perfect passive in υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον "having made the Son perfect forever." This analysis of the discourse context justifies the sense of ἐκάθισεν as installation and continuity of both offices, of which 8:1-6 is a culmination of Jesus Christ's kingship-priesthood ministry in heaven.

This research points out that ἐκάθισεν in relation to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης points to Jesus Christ sitting on the right-hand side of the throne indicating an induction to a kingly status, sharing royalty with His Father. Because the verb bears the implications of continuing,<sup>124</sup> wider literary context and the force

<sup>122</sup> Richard D. Nelson, "He Offered Himself: Sacrifice in Hebrews," *Interpretations: ProQuest Central* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 257.

<sup>123</sup> All translations are mine in the highlighted paragraph.

<sup>124</sup> Strong, *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. "καθίζω."

of the present infinitive and perfect tense discussed above supports that following the inauguration, He remains serving as King-priest. This continuity aspect negates the Jewish day of atonement view because, in the Jewish context, the ritual was a day's event and no king or priest continuously sat on the throne. The next step is the use of λειτουργός (Minister) to ascertain its significance in the phrase.

### **The Theological Implication of Λειτουργός (minister)**

The noun λειτουργός-minister implies a person providing public service to the nation at his own cost.<sup>125</sup> It also well denotes a commissioned servant,<sup>126</sup> one helping the state in civil service.<sup>127</sup> This means providing civil or religious services voluntarily, without individual gain. The noun λειτουργός equally refers to the priest.<sup>128</sup> This article notes that when referring to Jesus Christ, the noun implies His public role as a High Priest for Humanity. This means that He serves as an appointed priest mediating in heaven at God's right hand while co-ruling. The context in 7:25... πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. "Always living to keep on interceding for them" clarifies His priestly duty.

As a result, this research notes that the view suggesting that Jesus Christ sat on the right-hand side of the throne merely to signal finishing His work of redemption fails to consider the implication of λειτουργός, as service is inherent in the word.

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<sup>125</sup> William D. Mounce and Rick D. Bennett, Jr. ed., "λειτουργός," *Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament (MGD)* ([CD ROM] (Accordance Electronic edition, Oaktree software, 2011).

<sup>126</sup> Horst Balz, "λειτουργός," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 2:347.

<sup>127</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [CD ROM] (Accordance electronic edition: OakTree Software, n.d.). s.v. "λειτουργός."

<sup>128</sup> Cleon L. Rogers Jr and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, Accordance electronic edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), para. 38286.

Thus, this paper holds that the noun λειτουργός refers to a priest.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, when the noun relates to Jesus Christ, it means He has taken up the public responsibility of being a High Priest for humanity. The relationship of λειτουργός to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης shows that Jesus Christ is Priest while on the throne. After examining the keywords, the next section deals with the study of phrases to explain the significance of the expression under review.

### Phrase study

The following phrases are crucial for understanding the expression in question: ἐν δεξιᾷ, κεφάλαιον δὲ, τῆς μεγαλωσύνης, τοῦ θρόνου, ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ, τῶν ἁγίων, and νυν[ι] δὲ διαφορωτέρας. The first to discuss is Κεφάλαιον δὲ.

### The Theological Implication of Κεφάλαιον δὲ

Following Louw and Nida, in the phrase κεφάλαιον δὲ, κεφάλαιον entails the main point or summary of the previously given discourse.<sup>130</sup> Regarding κεφάλαιον, Abbot-Smith remarks that it implies “the chief point.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “κεφάλαιον.”

<sup>131</sup> G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM] (N.P.: OakTree Software, n.d.), s.v. “κεφάλαιον.”



It also signifies “the crowning or ultimate point.”<sup>132</sup> Since δὲ carries a contrasting sense (*but*), it further supports the progression sense (*and*).<sup>133</sup> Therefore, this analysis suggests that δὲ in the above construction is continuative, performing the role of a coordinate conjunction with the sense of “and” or “now.”<sup>134</sup> This connects the previous subunit at 7:20-28 and 8:1.

Likewise, δὲ also presents the new issues<sup>135</sup> of the heavenly sanctuary and new covenant themes in relation to the Christology and priesthood motifs. This analysis notes that the theme of Christ as the high priest spans chapters 2-9 (Heb. 2:17; 5:10; 6:19-20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11).<sup>136</sup> Hence, κεφάλαιον takes the sense of main point<sup>137</sup> in chapter 8:1 and not the summary. Thus, κεφάλαιον δὲ means “now (the) main point.” Harold Greenlee expounds a similar viewpoint regarding κεφάλαιον as the main point.<sup>138</sup>

Therefore, the unit in question introduces the Christology and priesthood motifs’ ultimate point<sup>139</sup> (κεφάλαιον), the crowning point of the Son’s exaltation to be king-priest on (the) right-hand side of the Majesty’s throne (Hebrews 1:2-3; 5:5-6,10; 6:19-20;

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<sup>132</sup> Mounce, ed., *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, s.v. “κεφάλαιον.”

<sup>133</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Accordance electronic edition (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 1183.

<sup>134</sup> William D. Mounce, *Biblical Greek: A Compact Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 166.

<sup>135</sup> Gerald L. Stevens, *New Testament Greek*, Accordance electronic edition (New York, NY: University Press of America, 1997), 80.

<sup>136</sup> Brad Embry, Ronald Herms, and Archie T. Wright, eds. *Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology*, vol. 2 Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 658.

<sup>137</sup> Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, para. 37801.

<sup>138</sup> Harold J. Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews*, 264.

<sup>139</sup> Rogers Jr and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Para. 37802.

7:16-17, 26, 28; 8:1-6). Hence, κεφάλαιον takes the sense of the main point in Chapter 8:1 and not the summary.

This analysis suggests that δὲ in the above construction is continuative, performing the role of a coordinate conjunction, taking the sense of “and or now.”<sup>140</sup> Therefore, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in relation to κεφάλαιον δὲ points to the culmination in the dual roles of the Son/king-high priest established in earlier chapters. After analysing the phrase κεφάλαιον δὲ, the next section discusses ἐν δεξιᾷ.

### The Theological Implication of ἐν Δεξιᾷ

In the prepositional expression ἐν δεξιᾷ, the adjective δεξιᾷ denotes both the actual right and authority.<sup>141</sup> When δεξιᾷ is used substantively, it signifies “right hand or right side.”<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the preposition ἐν takes many nuances of “in, on, among, with, at.”<sup>143</sup>

When ἐν is combined with δεξιᾷ the dative of place or position, it implies at/on<sup>144</sup> (the) right-hand side, which is a symbolic place of honour.<sup>145</sup> Some scholars favour the sense of at (the) right hand as the translation for ἐν δεξιᾷ.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>140</sup> William D. Mounce, *Biblical Greek: A Compact Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 166.

<sup>141</sup> Gregory A. Wolfe, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, Accordance electronic edition [CR ROM] (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2000), s.v. “Right Hand.”

<sup>142</sup> Mounce, ed., *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, s.v. “Right hand.”

<sup>143</sup> Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross, *A Book-by Book Guide to Septuagint*, Accordance electronic ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2019), 9.

<sup>144</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 586.

<sup>145</sup> Rogers Jr and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, Para. 26255.

<sup>146</sup> Douglas Penney, Colin Duriez, Tremper Longman, et al, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (DBI)*, s.v. “Ascension.”

This analysis posits that since the place is mentioned (τοῦ θρόνου) and position (δεξιᾷ), the preposition expresses location or position<sup>147</sup> on a surface hence, ἐν takes the sense of “on”<sup>148</sup> and not just proximity (at, by, near).<sup>149</sup> Thus, ἐν δεξιᾷ means on (the) right-hand side. Arthur Manning,<sup>150</sup> John Calvin and John Owens,<sup>151</sup> and Thoralf Gilbrant and Tor Inge Gilbrant<sup>152</sup> as well prefer this sense. Ἐν δεξιᾷ indicates equivalent authority and dignity, and with reference to the son of a king, it implies enthronement as an heir.<sup>153</sup>

On this ground, the study notes that the view taking the right-hand side as a place of honour without reference to space reflects the symbolic aspect of δεξιᾷ. However, it fails to account for the literary form of the pericope (which favours a literal sense) and the explicit mention of τοῦ θρόνου. It also does not address the purpose of sitting on God’s right-hand side: which is to offer public service for humanity. Therefore, this research affirms the literal sense of the adjective, suggesting that Christ has literally sat with the highest authority as a co-regent with the Father on the right-hand side of the Majesty (Hebrews 8:1). The next section discusses τοῦ θρόνου.

<sup>147</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., rev. and ed. Fredrick William Danker (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “ἐν.”

<sup>148</sup> Gerald L. Stevens, *New Testament Greek*, Accordance electronic ed. (New York, NY: University Press of America, 1997), 95.

<sup>149</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. “ἐν.”

<sup>150</sup> Arthur Manning, “The Bible and Extra-terrestrial Life,” *Bible and Spade* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 31.

<sup>151</sup> John Calvin and John Owen, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 178.

<sup>152</sup> Thoralf Gilbrant and Tor Inge Gilbrant, Acts–Revelation, *The Complete Biblical Library: The New Testament Study Bible*, ed. Ralph W. Harris, Stanley M. Horton, and Gayle Garrity Seaver (Tulsa, OK: Empowered Life, 2016), para. 44973.

<sup>153</sup> Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, *Exegetical Summary Series*, 89.

## The Theological Implication of τοῦ Θρόνου

The word *θρόνος* refers to the place of governing.<sup>154</sup> It refers to the seat from which the kings discharge royal functions.<sup>155</sup> It likewise implies a legal seat,<sup>156</sup> a large chair used by sovereigns on official events.<sup>157</sup> In the word *θρόνος* authority is symbolised.<sup>158</sup> The research favours *θρόνος* as a royal seat of authority for royal duties, as the context establishes Jesus Christ as High priest and King akin to the Melchizedekian order (Heb 5:5-6, 10; 7:1). Lacking indicators of judgment, the study advances τοῦ *θρόνου* as a seat of authority for priestly kingly intercessions in accordance with the Melchizedekian priesthood and fulfilling Psalm 110:1, 4 (cf. Hebrews 7:15).<sup>159</sup>

The expression in ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου “the scepter of uprightness (is) the scepter of your kingdom” in Hebrews 1:8 identifies the throne on which the Son sat on (the) right hand side in chapter 1:3 with a kingdom in verse 8. In chapter 1:4-6 the Son while on the throne is crowned with authority. Thus, God’s royal throne of authority in 8:1 remains in view. In Hebrews 8:6 the use of the noun μεσίτης, mediator and...πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν “always living to intercede for them” in 7:25, prove that the service on the royal throne is intercession for believers before God. Therefore, the concept of judgement may not be in view.

<sup>154</sup> Harold J. Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews, Exegetical Summary Series*, Accordance electronic edition (Dallas: SIL International, 1998), 29.

<sup>155</sup> Ronald Trail, *An Exegetical Summary of Revelation 1–11, Exegetical Summary Series*, Accordance electronic edition (Dallas: SIL International, 2003), 62.

<sup>156</sup> Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM]

<sup>157</sup> David Abernathy, *An Exegetical Summary of Matthew 1–16, Exegetical Summary Series*, Accordance electronic edition (Dallas: SIL International, 2013), 151.

<sup>158</sup> Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 56-57.

<sup>159</sup> Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters*, 119-120.

Furthermore, τοῦ θρόνου suggests a possessive genitive<sup>160</sup> with reference to τῆς μεγαλωσύνης (of the Majesty).<sup>161</sup> This indicates that τῆς μεγαλωσύνης (of the Majesty) God Himself<sup>162</sup> possesses the throne on which Jesus Christ sat. Therefore, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου reflects that Jesus Christ while on the throne shares divine rule as king. The section below analyses τῆς μεγαλωσύνης to determine its significance to the phrase under discussion.

### The Theological Implication of τῆς Μεγαλωσύνης

Concerning μεγαλωσύνης, Renn reveals that it is a name applied to God to attribute honour to Him.<sup>163</sup> It describes the power and Majesty of God.<sup>164</sup> Indirectly, it is God's name.<sup>165</sup> With reference to sitting on (the) right-hand side of the throne of power and greatness by Jesus Christ, this article proposes that the expression τῆς μεγαλωσύνης entails an attributive genitive<sup>166</sup> or genitive of association.<sup>167</sup> Thus, this article submits that Majesty assumes an element of approbation to God. Hence, Jesus Christ participates in the (τῆς μεγαλωσύνης) greatness and Majesty in partnership with His Father being a co-ruler or king, while serving as Priest (ἀρχιερέα). The following section examines the implications of τῶν ἁγίων regarding its role in identifying the meaning of the phrase in discussion.

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<sup>160</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 46.

<sup>161</sup> Translation is mine.

<sup>162</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 56-57.

<sup>163</sup> Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, s.v. "Majesty."

<sup>164</sup> Louw and Nida, eds, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, s.v. "μεγαλωσύνη."

<sup>165</sup> Balz and Schneider eds., "μεγαλωσύνη," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:399.

<sup>166</sup> Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar*, 48.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 62.

## The Theological Implication of τῶν ἁγίων

The construction τῶν ἁγίων relates to the sphere in heaven, where Jesus Christ ministers in (8:2). The adjective ἁγίων in the neuter genitive plural has association to the holy (things, places),<sup>168</sup> or both the sanctuary's holy and holy of holies.<sup>169</sup> This shows that the office of Jesus Christ in heaven involves the holy places on (the) right-hand side of the Father. Differing perspectives abound concerning the expression's significance. Some academics hypothesize that the term, in general means the sanctuary or holy of holies.<sup>170</sup> Other scholars favour the meaning of the innermost holy of holies.<sup>171</sup>

This analysis points out that the Septuagint utilizes τὸν ἅγιον, τῶν ἁγίων, and τὸ ἁγίασμα to refer to the sanctuary in general (Exodus 39:1, 25:8; Leviticus 21:22-23). The use of τῶν ἁγίων<sup>172</sup> in Exodus 39:1 seems to favour the view of the sanctuary in general. Second temple literature confirms the use of τῶν ἁγίων to mean a sanctuary.<sup>173</sup> On the other hand, τῶν ἁγίων in the LXX also has contexts favouring the inner sanctuary.<sup>174</sup> Some second temple texts share a similar use with the LXX.<sup>175</sup> The use of τὸ ἁγίασμα in the

<sup>168</sup> Rogers Jr and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, para. 37811.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. para. 37973.

<sup>170</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 57-58.

<sup>171</sup> Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, para. 38286.

<sup>172</sup> More examples of texts that seem to support τῶν ἁγίων as a general reference to the sanctuary include but not limited to the following: Numbers 3:32, 18:5; 1Chronicles 29:3; Ezekiel 8:6; 43:21, 48:10.

<sup>173</sup> Texts include but not limited to Judith 16:20; 1 Maccabees 3:43, 10:44, 14:15; Sirach 45:24.

<sup>174</sup> The context of such texts like Leviticus 21:12, 22; 2 Chronicles 5:11, 13-14, 29:5 Ezekiel 42:13, 44:19, 46:19, and τοῦ ἁγίου in Exodus 26:33 favour τῶν ἁγίων as inner sanctuary.

<sup>175</sup> The contexts of 1 Maccabees 9:54, 14:48 has this sense in view.

neuter accusative singular to mean sanctuary is generally attested in LXX.<sup>176</sup>

Some second temple texts also affirm this use.<sup>177</sup> In contrast, the sense of τὸ ἁγίασμα for the inner sanctuary is affirmed in LXX as well.<sup>178</sup> Some of the second temple works share similar uses.<sup>179</sup> However, τὸ ἁγίασμα does not occur in the text of Hebrews.

Furthermore, in the Nestle Aland text, the phrase τῶν ἁγίων occurs 30 times.<sup>180</sup> This research observes that the construction τὸ ἅγιον (the holy thing or place) in the singular generally implies sanctuary (Heb 9:1). The adjective ἅγια (holy place(s)) in the plural indicates the first inner holy place(s) (Heb 9:2), while ἅγια ἁγίων (most holy place(s)) in the plural genitive (Heb 9:3), applies to the most holy place(s) the second apartment. Marvin Vincent supports labeling ἅγια ἁγίων as most holy place(s), and ἅγια as holy place(s).<sup>181</sup> The author's use of τῶν ἁγίων (Heb 8:2, 9:8, 10:19) indicates that the inner holy place(s) is the specific area of Jesus' operation. Other experts similarly categorise ἅγια as the holy place(s) and ἅγια ἁγίων as the holy of holy place(s).<sup>182</sup>

<sup>176</sup> Texts include Exodus 25:8; 1 Chronicles 22:19; 28:10; 2 Chronicles 20:8, Isaiah 63:18; Lamentation 2:7.

<sup>177</sup> Texts include Judith 5:19; 1 Maccabees 1:37, 39, 46, 2:7, 3:45, 4:38, 5:1, 6:51; Sirach 47:13;

<sup>178</sup> Texts include 2 Chronicles 30:8; Lamentations 1:10;

<sup>179</sup> 1 Maccabees 1:21

<sup>180</sup> Of these occurrences, two times it modifies angels (Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26), three times it modifies the noun prophets (Luke 1:70, Acts 3:21, 2 Peter 3:2), twenty-one times it refers to "the saints or the church" (Acts 26:10; Rom 12:13; Rom 15:26; Rom 16:2; 1 Cor 6:1; 1 Cor 14:33; 2 Cor 9:12; Eph 2:19; Eph 4:12; Eph 6:18; Col 1:12; 1 Thess 3:13; Phlm 7; Rev 5:8; Rev 8:3; Rev 13:7; Rev 13:10; Rev 14:12; Rev 17:6; Rev 19:8; Rev 20:9), and three times in Hebrews it refers only to the specific location or places in relation to Christ's work (Heb 8:2; Heb 9:8; Heb 10:19).

<sup>181</sup> Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Accordance electronic edition [CD ROM],

<sup>182</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 63.

This article attests that τὰ ἅγια (Heb 9:12, 9:24), and τῶν ἁγίων (Heb 8:2) all refer to the same place (holy place(s)) where Jesus entered. Conversely, other scholars state that τὰ ἅγια lacks differentiation between holy or most holy places.<sup>183</sup> This study argues that if the most holy place is intended, the construction τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων (Leviticus 21:22, Ezekiel 43:3 LXX) or ἅγια ἁγίων (Heb 9:3) would have been employed. However, appealing to scripture similarity, this article remarks that on Earth, the mercy seat (Exodus 25:20-22; Heb 9:4-5) was in the most holy place. Similarly, Davidson theorizes that the throne in heaven is in the most holy place.<sup>184</sup> Referring to Jesus Christ's location in heaven, A. Robertson advocates for the holy place(s) on the throne.<sup>185</sup>

On the contrary, this article postulates that while the Son and Father may work from the same throne, the correspondence between earth and heaven's sanctuaries is on fundamental aspects<sup>186</sup> (Heb 10:11-12), and not on details (Heb 10:19). For example, the flesh of Jesus in heaven acts as an antitype curtain dividing the two holy places in the earthly tent (Heb 10:20). Thus, the Aaronic day of atonement may be remote as τὰ ἅγια (Heb 9:12, 9:24), and τῶν ἁγίων (Heb 8:2, 9:8, 10:19) all refer to the same holy place(s) where Jesus entered at ascension, indicating the first inner apartment in the heavenly sanctuary.

Furthermore, the preposition εἰς with verbs of motion in relation to τὰ ἅγια (Heb 9:12, 9:24-25, 13:11) indicates extension to a specific place.<sup>187</sup> On this account, this study submits that specificity,

<sup>183</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*,

<sup>184</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Inauguration or Day of Atonement? A Response to Norman H. Young's 'Old Testament Background to Hebrews 6:19-20 Revisited,'" *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 70.

<sup>185</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*,

<sup>186</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 60.

<sup>187</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "εἰς."



rather than generality, may be in view of the place where Christ entered. Consequently, the study observes that the mentioning of τῶν ἁγίων (Heb 8:2) as the place of the Son's labour, the priesthood functionalities in the inner sanctuary are in view. At the same time, the mentioning of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης reflects the royal functionalities. This results in a combination of the Priestly and Kingly functions of the Son. The section below examines the role of the expression ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ.

### The Theological Implication of Ὑποδείγματι καὶ Σκιᾷ

The expression ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ (translated as copy and shadow)<sup>188</sup> with respect to the function of the earthly sanctuary priests, adds relevance to grasping the theological implication of the expression under discussion. Ὑποδείγματι has senses such as “example, model, pattern; outline, sketch, symbol.”<sup>189</sup> It similarly refers to an illustration.<sup>190</sup>

The syntactical relation of ὑποδείγματι with καὶ σκιᾷ, depicts “a faint symbol and faint reflection”<sup>191</sup> simultaneously. Σκιᾷ also denotes a reflection of something, a faint or vague prototype or pattern corresponding to reality.<sup>192</sup>

This expression indicates an inferior or imperfect reproduction of the reality.<sup>193</sup> This article proposes that both ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ do not convey a perfect or precise equivalence to reality, but indicate a model or example and reflection or faint prototype or pattern of reality respectively. Hence, ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in relation to ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ suggests that the sitting on

<sup>188</sup> *New American Standard Bible (NAS20S)*.

<sup>189</sup> Rodney J. Decker, *Koine Greek Reader*, Accordance electronic edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2007), 78.

<sup>190</sup> Rogers Jr and Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, para. 17940.

<sup>191</sup> Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews*, *Exegetical Summary Series*, 271.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>193</sup> Holbrook, ed., *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 59.

(the) right-hand side of the Majesty's throne by Jesus Christ in the sanctuary above lacks an equivalent human event, done by an earthly High Priest. While the conversation in the verse resembles an expiation ritual by the Jewish High Priest, the atonement day seems unintended. On the atonement day, the earthly High Priest could not sit on the mercy seat in the most holy place(s).

Thus, Christ's Ministry transcends the earthly realities. After analysing the significance of ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ, the following section turns to διαθήκης μεσίτης.

### The Theological Implication of Διαθήκης Μεσίτης

The Greek noun μεσίτης can express "a guarantor, mediator."<sup>194</sup> It expresses the sense of a surety.<sup>195</sup> It additionally describes one who guides the two sides into a relationship.<sup>196</sup> This analysis, based on the historical context after Jesus Christ's death, interprets "guarantor or surety" of a new covenant (μεσίτης διαθήκης) as the sense for μεσίτης. Other academics support a similar sense of μεσίτη.<sup>197</sup> This task depends on His death and self-offering on humanity's behalf being the surety for the superior covenant. Therefore, examining the expression μεσίτης διαθήκης, in relation to ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης this article submits that the Son "on (the) right-hand side of the throne"<sup>198</sup> has the responsibility of being the guarantor for the new covenant, while serving as Priest and King in the holy place(s). The next section discusses the phrase within the context of the sentence.

<sup>194</sup> Silva, ed., "μεσίτης," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:284.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>196</sup> Louw and Nida, eds, "μεσίτης," *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 368.

<sup>197</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 61.

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.en.wikisource.org/wiki?curid=44041>

## The Study of the Sentence

The context of the sentence in which the expression under study appears needs an examination to determine the literary context and sense of the phrase:

Heb 8:1 Κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, 2 τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ κύριος, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος.

As pointed out earlier, κεφάλαιον δὲ presents the crowning fact, regarding the Son Jesus Christ sitting (ἐκάθισεν) on (the) right-hand side of God's throne (ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης) in the heavens (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) as King. The construction τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς (a priest of the holy place(s)) signals where He operates from and His duty. Therefore, in this sentence, the views of royalty and priesthood<sup>199</sup> are textually sustained because of the use of throne (ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης) and High Priest (ἀρχιερέα). The phrase in its unit is the next step of this study.

## Literary Unit Study (Heb 8:1-6)

Studying the pericope in this section provides insights for interpreting the implications of the expression. Key terms in the unit comprise ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ, διαθήκης μεσίτης, and τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς. The expression τῶν ἁγίων pinpoints the location where Jesus Christ went and sat on the right-hand side of God's throne. The term λειτουργὸς specifies the mission is being the priest while on the right-hand side of the Majesty's throne. The senses of ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ imply that ecclesiastics performing during the temporal tabernacle were not perfect counterparts, but remote copies of Jesus' heavenly sanctuary work. Other experts confirm that parallels may occur in primary elements.<sup>200</sup> The meaning of

<sup>199</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 2-3.

<sup>200</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 60.

διαθήκης μεσίτης focuses on Jesus Christ's role as a surety for humanity's salvation in a superior covenant.<sup>201</sup>

For this reason, this study postulates that ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in relation to διαθήκης μεσίτης indicates that Jesus Christ's sitting was simultaneously the establishment of His kingship and priesthood as the ruler and mediator of the better covenant. This is the ultimate point of the king priest concept. Having examined the unit in its setting, the section below analyses the significance of the aorist tense.

### **The Theological Implication of the Perfect and Aorist Tenses**

The aorist tense in vv 1 and 2 in ἐκάθισεν and ἔπηξεν, as well as the perfect tense in v6 in νενομοθέτηται and τέτυχεν, possess theological significance in the expression. The aorist demonstrates that the act is perfective or completed yet undetermined.<sup>202</sup> At the same time, the perfect tense shows the result of an antecedent completed action,<sup>203</sup> yet felt at the current time of the author or speaker.<sup>204</sup> The indicative mood suggests that the verb's action occurred in the past.<sup>205</sup>

Consequently, this study claims that the sitting (ἐκάθισεν) by Jesus Christ on (the) right-hand side of God's throne, as well as mounting (ἔπηξεν) the sanctuary wherein He operates from, all are understood as finished and holistic events in the past according to the writer's historical setting. Hence, sitting on (the) right-hand side cannot refer to a futuristic event after the writer's time. Thus, the focus of the ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in relation to the

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<sup>201</sup> Holbrook, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, 61.

<sup>202</sup> Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 49, 56.

<sup>203</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 230-231.

<sup>204</sup> Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us*, 58.

<sup>205</sup> Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer, 289.

two tenses, is the event occurring at Jesus' ascension and not later events. The perfect tense in *νενομοθέτηται* (He has enacted) and *τέτυχεν* (He has obtained)<sup>206</sup> indicates that the continuing outcomes of the previous act of sitting in heaven on (the) right-hand side of God's throne as a High-Priest are in sight.

The outcomes show that Jesus Christ has acquired a better ministry (High Priest-King) that He Himself has ratified. He remains surety for mortals with the Father in a superior covenant. The following section analyses intratextuality and its significance to the phrase in review.

### The Significance of Intratextuality

The study of intratextuality adds insights to the understanding of the term under study. The expression examined occurs in Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1, 10:12, and 12:2. The intratextuality associations of these expressions are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Intratextuality**

Hebrews 1:3	Hebrews 8:1	Hebrews 10:11-12	Hebrews 12:2
And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power	Now the main point in what has been said <i>is this</i> : we have such a high priest	Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins	Looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith

<sup>206</sup> Aland et al., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (GNT28-T)*.

When He had made purification of sins		but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time	who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame
He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high	who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens	Sat down at the right hand of God	and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

A critical intratextuality survey on the table’s first row shows that the Son, is the “exact likeness,”<sup>207</sup> “exact embodiment”<sup>208</sup> of His Father; the High Priest and the perfector and originator of faith.<sup>209</sup> The table’s row 2 reveals that Jesus willingly died of the shameful death on the cross once and for all to purify and atone for humanity’s sin. Lastly, row 3 of the table shows that Jesus Christ settled “on (the) right-hand side”<sup>210</sup> of the throne of God following His substitutionary death. On this account, the viewpoint that Jesus sat on (the) right-hand side as having finished the earthly work of redemption has contextual support. Nevertheless, it fails to take into account the use of λειτουργός (minister or priest) and διαθήκης μεσίτης-guarantor of a better covenant (8:2, 6).

<sup>207</sup> Ralph W. Harris, Stanley M. Horton, and Gayle G. Seaver, eds., *The Complete Biblical Library: New Testament Greek-English Dictionary* (N.p.: World Library Press, 1998), s.v. “χαρακτήρ.”

<sup>208</sup> Silva ed., *NIDNTT*, “χαρακτήρ,” 4:652-653.

<sup>209</sup> Brian Small, “The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews,” accessed 15 February 2024, [https:// www.brill.com/display/title/23678](https://www.brill.com/display/title/23678)

<sup>210</sup> Accessed 15 February 2024, <https://www.clearcreekchapel.org/uploads/Hebrews.pdf>

From the table analysis, this study notes that the purpose of the Son's sitting ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης was to become a King-High Priest and a better covenant guarantor. Jesus' Sonship is associated with sharing similar attributes and the heirship of all things with His Father (Heb 1:1-3). For this reason, Jesus Christ participates in His Father's greatness and King's authority. After reviewing the chapters above, this analysis observes that Jesus Christ is recognised as the Son, High Priest, and King installed on (the) right-hand side of the Majesty's throne. The following section presents theological synthesis.

### THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

Having analyzed the research segments, this part combines findings to understand the theological implications for the construction ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Heb 8:1-6. To question (1): How does the contextual analysis help in understanding the theological implications of ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης in Hebrews 8:1?

After evaluating the cultural setting usage, the expression ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης suggests Jesus Christ's installation to a position of authority and honour.

The political context shows that Jesus Christ being God's Son, sitting on (the) right-hand side of the Majesty, was installed to the royal rank beside the Father, sharing the Divine greatness and equality (Heb 1:3, 6, 8,13).

To question (2): How do linguistic investigations clarify the interpretations of the phrase under study? The literary form indicates that the discourse unit has a Christology concept, emerging from Hebrews 1:2-3. The King-Priest concept (7:15-28) achieves its apex in section 8:1-6. This unit establishes that the Son-High Priest-King on (the) right-hand side of the Majesty's throne, in the sanctuary's first inner holy place is the crowning fact (Κεφάλαιον δέ).

The examination of key words, phrases, sentences, and units reveals that ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης denotes co-

rulership between Son and Father, sharing equality and worldwide sovereignty above all dominions. The phrase τοῦ θρόνου designates the Son participating in greatness and divine power beside God as τῆς μεγαλωσύνης applies to God Himself. The construction τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργῶς confirms Jesus Christ as Priest interceding for humanity in the holy place(s). The expression ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ shows that earthly sanctuary priests were not perfect equivalents to Jesus Christ's heavenly role, serving only an imitation of reality and a suggestive representation. Διαθήκης μεσίτης depicts Jesus Christ's superiority in a superior covenant as humanity's surety for salvation.

The aorist tense in ἐκάθισεν demonstrates that Jesus Christ sat in heaven as a consummated event on His Father's right-hand side. The perfect tense force in νενομοθέτηται and τέτυχεν reveals the enduring outcomes of Jesus Christ as a king priest having sat on (the) right-hand side.

An examination of the intratextuality shows that the construction ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης occurs in many chapters with a logical formula. First, Jesus Christ, established as God's Son, is the exact embodiment with divine attributes similar to those of the Father, the High Priest, originator, and faith perfecter. Second, Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice to purify sins once for all. Third, having sat on the right-hand side of the Majesty's throne as the Son-Priest-King in the Melchizedekian order at ascension, He remains the guarantor performing mediation with the Father.

### **Conclusion and Reflections**

From the research findings, this paper concludes that interpreting ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης as the induction of Jesus Christ as King-High Priest in the holy place(s) following the Melchizedek order, and the new covenant ratification is exegetically and textually reasonable. This perspective has no earthly Aaronic priestly rituals in view, but Jesus Christ's superiority as King-High Priest and serving as guarantor for humanity's salvation on (the)



right-hand side of God. Not to start the Jewish atonement day, but to meditate as a High Priest while sharing Kingship with the Father.

Today, the church needs to understand the implications of Christ sitting on the right-hand side of the Majesty's throne in the holy place(s). Jesus Christ's presence and service on humanity's behalf is the surety of salvation. Christ sat after completing His self-sacrificing work and remains interceding for humanity as a King-High Priest. Whenever believers sin, they should not lose hope as Christ continues His mediatory ministry. Christ's ministry is not a continuation of the Aaronic earthly ministry, but superior, transcending it, as He is a minister of a better covenant.