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L. D. Hurst

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65

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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For Lincoln Moody Hurst

1918–1986

A just man made perfect (Heb. 12:23)

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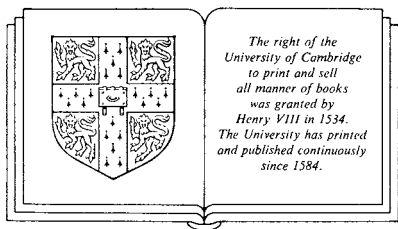
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The Epistle to the Hebrews

Its background of thought

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0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction	1
PART 1 NON-CHRISTIAN BACKGROUNDS	5
1 Philo, Alexandria and Platonism	7
1 History of discussion	7
2 Unresolved issues	11
Philo's role in Judaism	11
Platonic, Philonic or Alexandrian language	13
"Hellenism" and "apocalyptic"	21
3 Conclusion	41
2 Qumran	43
1 History of discussion	43
2 Points of contact	45
Angels	45
Messianic conceptions	46
The prophet like Moses	49
Melchizedek	52
The use of the Old Testament	61
3 Conclusion	65
3 Other non-Christian backgrounds	67
1 Pre-Christian gnosticism	67
The case for a gnostic background	68
The case against a gnostic background	70
Conclusion for a gnostic background	74
2 The Samaritans	75
The case for a Samaritan background	75
The case against a Samaritan background	77

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	<i>vi</i>
Conclusion for a Samaritan background	82
3 <i>Merkabah</i> mysticism	82
The case for <i>Merkabah</i> mysticism	82
The case against <i>Merkabah</i> mysticism	84
Conclusion for <i>Merkabah</i> mysticism	84
PART 2 CHRISTIAN BACKGROUNDS	87
4 The Stephen tradition	89
1 History of discussion	89
2 Acts 7 in Lucan redaction	90
The view of the law in Acts 7	91
The view of the temple in Acts 7	92
The view of mission in Acts 7	93
3 Points of contact	94
The attitude to the cult and law	95
Jesus' claim to supersede the cult and law	98
Israel in motion	98
God's "living" word	100
God's "rest"	102
The law and angels	103
"Looking to Jesus"	103
Exodus 25:40	104
4 Lingering doubts	104
5 Conclusion	105
5 Pauline theology	107
1 History of discussion	107
2 Points of contact	110
The destiny of humankind	110
Christ's obedience, humbling as a human being and subsequent exaltation	113
Faith	119
3 Conclusion	124
6 First Peter	125
1 History of discussion	125
2 Points of contact	126
Common Greek idiom	128
Independent use of the OT	128
Common Christian tradition	129
Pauline influence	129
3 Conclusion	130

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	<i>vii</i>
Conclusion	131
<i>Notes</i>	134
<i>Bibliography</i>	183
<i>Index of passages quoted</i>	198
<i>General index</i>	209

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

This study is a revised and shortened version of a thesis accepted by the University of Oxford in 1982 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. George Caird acted as supervisor. Over several years he patiently read at least three drafts of each chapter, always producing many pages of handwritten criticism. My debt to him is recorded elsewhere, most obviously in the volume of memorial essays entitled *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987). But to this he would like me to add that our original interest in this investigation was as a kind of *Grundausbildung* for his forthcoming New International Critical Commentary on Hebrews. I still treasure a letter he wrote me in 1982 in which he stated his intention to build much of his commentary on the following work. His unheralded death in 1984 can only mean the loss of what would have been a memorable exercise in New Testament exegesis.

I would also like to thank those of my colleagues, at Davis and elsewhere, who read the thesis in whole or in part and made suggestions. To my former pupils Bill Kynes and Mike Tristram I owe a special debt of gratitude, for they helped to stimulate and refine questions which in 1978 were just beginning to be asked. The Senior New Testament Seminar at Oxford listened patiently to papers on the christology and eschatology of Hebrews and made probing criticisms.

It is perhaps especially fitting that this work should have taken its final shape while I was serving as New Testament lecturer at Mansfield College, Oxford. James Moffatt, who produced the first International Critical Commentary on Hebrews, and Caird, who was to do the second, were both at Mansfield. And anyone who wears a Mansfield tie bears constant testimony to Hebrews 1:2 – *Deus Locutus est Nobis in Filio*, as the Latinized college motto has it. I should like to express my thanks to the Senior Common Room there, particularly the Rev. Charles Brock and Dr. and Mrs. M. P. Mahony, for their friendship and support in what were sometimes difficult circumstances.

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0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

x

Special gratitude is also due to Prof. R. McL. Wilson, who first showed interest in this work as a monograph. His newly published, outstanding exposition of Hebrews reached me barely in time to take account of it here, however minimally. Professor Graham Stanton, the editor of this series, provided a series of careful suggestions which were matched only by his great patience in awaiting the outcome.

I should also like to thank the staff of Cambridge University Press, and in particular Mr. Alex Wright, for their patience and skill in guiding the book to a successful conclusion.

For many years my friends Harp and Barbara Junta supported me both personally and financially; without their faithful help I could not have completed this work. They are too unselfish to expect my gratitude, but I should like publicly to record it.

Finally, to my parents I owe all. Apart from life and a loving home, they gave me their encouragement and help from beginning to end. My father wished very much to see this work in print, but his long and ultimately unsuccessful battle with leukemia thwarted his intent. Making his triumphal entry on the morning of Palm Sunday, 1986, he joined the innumerable ranks of those who, following the lead of their great forerunner, have gone through the veil and penetrated the greatest mystery of all.

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient works

<i>Ad Autol.</i>	<i>To Autolycus</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquities</i>
Asc. Is.	Ascension of Isaiah
ben Sira	The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira
B.T.	Babylonian Talmud
CD	Covenant of Damascus
<i>De Abr.</i>	<i>On Abraham</i>
<i>De cher.</i>	<i>On the Cherubim</i>
<i>De conf. ling.</i>	<i>On the Confusion of Tongues</i>
<i>De gig.</i>	<i>On the Giants</i>
<i>De migr. Abr.</i>	<i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>De op. M.</i>	<i>On the Creation</i>
<i>De plant.</i>	<i>On Noah's Work as a Planter</i>
<i>De post. C.</i>	<i>On the Posterity and Exile of Cain</i>
<i>De somn.</i>	<i>On Dreams</i>
<i>De spec. leg.</i>	<i>On the Special Laws</i>
<i>De vit. M.</i>	<i>On the Life of Moses</i>
<i>El.</i>	<i>Electra</i>
1 En.	1 Enoch
<i>Enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i>
<i>Eum.</i>	<i>Eumenides</i>
Gen. Apoc.	Genesis Apocryphon
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
<i>Leg. all.</i>	<i>Allegorical Interpretation</i>
LXX	Septuagint version of the OT
1 Macc.	1 Maccabees
2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of abbreviations*

xii

MT	Massoretic text of the Hebrew Bible
Num. Naso	Numbers Naso
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
<i>Oed. Rex</i>	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>
Odes Sol.	Odes of Solomon
<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Praep. evang.</i>	<i>Preparation for the Gospel</i>
<i>Qu. in Exod.</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Exodus</i>
<i>Quis rer.</i>	<i>Who is the Heir?</i>
<i>Quod Deus</i>	<i>On the Unchangeableness of God</i>
1QH	Qumran Hymns
1QM	Qumran War Scroll
1QpH	Qumran Habakkuk Commentary
1QS	Qumran Manual of Discipline
1QSa	Qumran Messianic Rule
4QDeut	4 QDeuteronomy
4QFl	4 QFlorilegium
4QPB	4 QPatriarchal Blessings
11QMelch	11 QMelchizedek
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
Sib.	Sibylline Oracles
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
Tob.	Tobit
TR	Teacher of Righteousness
<i>v.l.</i>	Variant reading
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Modern works

<i>AJR</i>	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AV	Authorized Version
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CJT</i>	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
<i>CQR</i>	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of abbreviations*

xiii

<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Interp.</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JThC</i>	<i>Journal of Theology and Church</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MTZ</i>	<i>Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>NEB</i>	New English Bible
<i>NRT</i>	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>REB</i>	Revised English Bible
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RSV</i>	Revised Standard Version
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SNTS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , vols. I–IX, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1964–74)
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>ThR</i>	<i>Theologisches Rundschau</i>
<i>ThZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>VuF</i>	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Cambridge University Press

0521673402 - The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought

L. D. Hurst

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of abbreviations

xiv

ZNW *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

ZThK *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Abbreviations of the titles of the works of Philo and other ancient writers follow the pattern of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown (Exeter, 1975), I, pp.31–40.