

## Hebrews 1:10

In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. (NIV)

1. This verse is quoted from the Old Testament (Ps.102:25), where it applied to *Yahweh*, and the author of Hebrews is lifting it from the Psalms and applying it to Jesus Christ. The subject of the verse changes from *Yahweh* (Old Testament) to Jesus Christ (New Testament). It makes sense, therefore, that the action being attributed changes also. Many Old Testament verses testify that God created the original heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1, *etc.*) However, both the Old Testament and New Testament tell us that there will be a new heavens and earth after this one we are currently inhabiting. In fact, there will be two more. First, the heaven and earth of the Millennium, the 1000 years Christ rules the earth, which will perish (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 20:1-10), and then the heaven and earth of Revelation 21:1ff, which will exist forever. The context reveals clearly that Hebrews 1:10 is speaking of these *future* heavens and earth. If we simply continue to read in Hebrews, remembering that the original texts had no chapter breaks, Scripture tells us, “It is not to angels that He has subjected **the world to come, about which we are speaking**” (Heb. 2:5). This verse is very clear. The subject of this section of Scripture is not the current heavens and earth, but the future heavens and earth. The reader must remember that the word “beginning” does not have to apply to the absolute beginning of time, but rather the beginning of something the author is referring to (see the note on this on John 6:64). When this verse is referring to the work of the Father, as it is in the Old Testament, it refers to the beginning of the entire heavens and earth. When it is applied to the Son, it refers to the beginning of his work, not the beginning of all creation, as Hebrews 2:5 makes clear.

2. Although we ascribe to the explanation above, a number of theologians read this verse and see it as a reference to the Father, which is a distinct possibility. Verse 10 starts with the word “and” in the Greek text, so verse 9 and 10 are conjoined. Since verse 9 ends with, “Your God has set you [the Christ] above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy,” these theologians see the reference to “the Lord” in the beginning of verse 10 as a reference back to the God last mentioned, *i.e.*, the Father. Norton explains this point of view:

Now the God last mentioned was Christ’s God, who had anointed him; and the author [of the book of Hebrews], addressing himself to this God, breaks out into the celebration of his power, and especially his unchangeable duration; which he dwells upon in order to prove the stability of the Son’s kingdom...*i.e.*, thou [God] who hast promised him such a throne, *art he who laid the foundation of the earth*. So it seems to be a declaration of God’s immutability made here, to ascertain the durableness of Christ’s kingdom, before mentioned; and the rather so, because this passage had been used originally for the same purpose in the 102nd Psalm, *viz.* [Author uses *KJV*] To infer thence this conclusion, “*The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed be established before Thee*. In like manner, it here proves the *Son’s* throne should be established *forever and ever*, by the same argument, *viz.*, by God’s immutability.”<sup>1</sup>

Theologians such as Norton say that as it is used in the Old Testament, the verse shows that the unchanging God can indeed fulfill His promises, and they see it used in exactly the same way in Hebrews: since God created the heavens and the earth, and since He will not pass away, He is fit to promise an everlasting kingdom to His Son.

Authors who believe that the verse refers to the Son:

Broughton and Southgate, pp. 289-295

Buzzard, pp. 161 and 162

*Racovian Catechism*, pp. 95-105

Authors who believe that the verse applies to the Father:

Hyndman, p. 137

Morgridge, p. 122

Norton, p. 214

### **Endnotes:**

1. Norton, *Reasons*, pp. 214 and 215.

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