

REV Bible: Hebrews 1:8 Commentary

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but of the Son *it says*, **Your throne is God forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.**^a

a [8]

From [Ps. 45:6](#)

“it says.” The “it says” is missing from [Hebrews 1:8](#), but the ellipsis is supplied from [Hebrews 1:7](#). The “it” is the text of [Psalm 45:6](#), and in [Psalm 45](#) the psalmist is extolling the king, the Lord Jesus Christ. Although many English versions have “he says,” the text does not say that.

[For more on “it says,” see [commentary on Heb. 1:7](#).]

“Your throne is God.” [Hebrews 1:8](#) is an almost exact quotation from the Septuagint version of [Psalm 45:6](#), which itself was a very good translation of the Hebrew text of [Psalm 45:6](#), and [Hebrews 1:9](#) is from the Septuagint of [Psalm 45:7](#), which is a good translation of the Hebrew text of [Psalm 45:7](#).

[Psalm 45:6](#) was God’s revelation to the Jews about their king, and here in Hebrews, [Psalm 45:6-7](#) is being used to show that Jesus Christ is indeed God’s Messiah as was foretold in the Old Testament. Furthermore, not only was Jesus foretold to be the exalted king, he is presented in Hebrews as being better than angels ([Heb. 1:4](#)). The theme of [Hebrews 1](#) centers around the Father’s rule and elevation of the Son over the rest of creation. God spoke through the prophets, and then through His Son, who He appointed heir of all things and who is now seated at God’s right hand as second in command under God. The Son has become better than the angels, who pay homage to him. The angels are ministers of God, but God Himself is the Son’s authority to rule, and God—the God of the Son—anoointed him and set him above his companions, such that the Son now sits on God’s right hand.

Hebrews exalts the Son, and in so doing exalts the Father. But in contrast to what Trinitarians say, [Hebrews 1:8](#) (and thus [Psalm 45:6](#)) does not call Jesus, “God,” and does not support the Trinity. To see that fully, one must study [Psalm 45](#). Upon examination, [Psalm 45](#) does not support the Trinity, so when it is quoted in [Hebrews 1:8](#) then that quotation does not support the Trinity either. The Jews read [Psalm 45](#) for centuries and never concluded that the Messiah would be “God in the flesh” or somehow be part of a Triune God. But beyond that, it is clear in [Psalm 45](#) that the person who is the subject of the Psalm is not God, but is a human being (see the REV [commentary on Psalm 45:6](#), where there is an explanation as to why this verse is not calling the king, “God” and why [Psalm 45](#) does not support the Trinity).

Some Biblical Unitarians believe that [Psalm 45:6](#) and [Hebrews 1:8](#) are calling the Messiah “god.” They recognize that this king is not being called “God” with a capital “G,” but they think the Messiah is being called “god,” and they translate both [Psalm 45:6](#) and [Hebrews 1:8](#) as having “god” with a lowercase “g.” It is true that in the biblical languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, the word “GOD” had a much broader meaning than it does today (Hebrew and Aramaic have only uppercase letters, and all the ancient Greek manuscripts were in capital letters, so the manuscripts all read “GOD”). In the biblical languages, “GOD” was a descriptive title applied to a range of authorities, including angels and demons, lesser gods, great people, rulers, and people acting with God’s authority. The word “God” in both Hebrew and Greek could refer to a human being, especially a human being

acting under God’s authority. Even Jesus Christ said that ([John 10:34-35](#)). So with the understanding that the word “GOD” could refer to a human being, a Biblical Unitarian translation of [Hebrews 1:8](#) is, “Your throne, O god, is forever and ever.” But although “Your throne, O god, is forever and ever” is a legitimate translation of [Hebrews 1:8](#), there is evidence that “Your throne is God forever and ever” is actually a better translation (some arguments for that are in the REV [commentary on Psalm 45:6](#)).

The renowned Greek scholar and Trinitarian, A. T. Robertson noted that the Greek word *theos* (God) could be understood as a vocative, “O God,” or as a nominative, as in the phrase, “God is thy throne” or “Thy throne is God.” He wrote: “Either [translation] makes good sense.”^a While it is true that from a strictly translational point of view either a vocative or nominative translation is acceptable, all translation is informed by context and scope, and the context strongly argues against the translation “Your throne, O God.”

B. F. Westcott (a Trinitarian and most well-known for the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament) put the translation, “God is thy throne” as primary in his commentary.^b He did not think that the vocative “O God” (or “O god”) was the best choice given the scope of Scripture. Westcott wrote: “It is scarcely possible that *elohim* in the original [Hebrew text of [Ps. 45:6](#)] can be addressed to the king. The presumption, therefore, is against the belief that *ho theos* [God] is a vocative in the LXX [Septuagint]. Thus on the whole it seems best to adopt in the first clause the rendering: *God is Thy throne* (or, *Thy throne is God*), that is, ‘Thy kingdom is founded upon God, the immovable Rock...The phrase ‘God is Thy throne’ is not indeed found elsewhere, but it is in no way more strange than Ps. lxxi.3, [Lord] be Thou to me a rock of habitation...Thou art my rock and my fortress” (italics his; Westcott uses the unpointed Hebrew font and the Greek font in his commentary).

[For more information on spirit beings who represent God, see [commentary on Gen. 1:26](#) about God’s divine council; and [commentary on Gen. 16:7](#) about the custom of a person using an agent to represent them. For more information on the flexible use of the words translated “God,” such as *Elohim* and *Theos*, see [commentary on John 20:28](#). For more information on Jesus not being God, see [Appendix 10](#), “Jesus is the Son of God, Not God the Son.” For more information on [Hebrews 1:8](#), see, James Broughton and Peter Southgate, *The Trinity: True or False* (The Dawn Book Supply, 1995), pp. 196, 197; Don Snedeker, *Our Heavenly Father Has No Equals* (International Scholars Publication, 1998; pp. 459-463); Patrick Navas, *Divine Truth or Human Tradition* (Authorhouse, 2011), pp. 385-393; Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *One God & One Lord*, (Christian Educational Services, 3rd edition), p. 504-506.]

Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 5:339.

Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 24-26.