At the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author is concerned to establish the superiority of Christ over the angels. He does this by stringing together a series of quotations, beginning with verses from Ps 2 and 2 Sam 7:

For to which of the angels did God ever say,  
‘You are my son; today I have begotten you’? (Ps 2:7)

Or again,

I will be his father, and he will be my son (2 Sam 7:14).¹

In his commentary on Hebrews, Harold Attridge notes that “the form of this material resembles the catenae or florilegia found at Qumran, which share some of the texts found here.”² He suggests that “such collections of messianic proof texts probably circulated in early Christian circles and it is likely that the author used such a traditional collection at this point.”³

One of the texts that Attridge had in mind as a model for Hebrews is the so-called Florilegium, 4Q174.⁴ This is not simply a catena, but a thematic interpretation of various passages from Deut 33, 2 Sam 7, and Pss 1, 2, and 5.⁵ The extant fragment of the passage dealing with 2 Sam 7 begins with 2 Sam 7:10–11a, which is interpreted using phrases

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¹ The passage goes on to cite Deut 32:43 (LXX), Ps 104:4; Ps 45:6–7; Ps 102:25–7; and Ps 110:1.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Annette Steudel, Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie aus der Qumrangemeinde (4QMidrEschat) (STDJ 13; Leiden: Brill, 1994) argues that 4Q174 is part of a longer work, of which another part is found in 4Q177. George Brooke, “Florilegium,” EDSS 1:197 points out that there is no textual overlap between the two manuscripts and prefers to regard them as separate compositions.
⁵ See the reconstruction by Steudel, Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie, 23–33.
from Exod 15:17 and Deut 23:3–4. This is followed by the citation and interpretation of 2 Sam 7:11aβ. Then there is an abbreviated citation of 2 Sam 7:11b–14a, concluding with the passage cited in Hebrews: “I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me.” This, we are told, refers to the Branch of David, who will arise with the Interpreter of the Law at the end of days, and this interpretation is supported from Amos 9:11 (“I will raise up the booth of David which is fallen”). At this point there is a vacat, and a new section is introduced: “Midrash of 'Happy is the man who has not walked in the council of the wicked'” (Ps 1:1). In this case the interpretation is introduced by the technical term pesher, which was not used in the interpretation of 2 Sam 7. Only the opening half verse of Ps 1 is cited, and it is interpreted with phrases drawn from Isa 8:11 and Ezek 37:23. Then the first two verses of Ps 2 are cited. Only fragments of the interpretation are preserved.

The question arises whether there is any intrinsic relationship between the two passages that are cited, other than the fact that both are given an eschatological interpretation. George Brooke has argued that “consideration of the content of the interpretations themselves” suggests there was a closer relationship. The opening verses of the two psalms, according to Brooke, function as incipits, which imply the rest of the psalm. The final section of the interpretation of 2 Sam 7:14 refers to the Branch of David, the kingly messiah. “The subsequent implied citation of the whole of Psalm 2 makes the interpretative purpose clear, since from Psalm 2.2 it is obvious that the son of Psalm 2.7 also refers to the Messiah, the kingly one, as Psalm 2.6 makes clear.” He concludes that 4Q174 “seems to offer citations and interpretations of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2 which show that the two scriptural passages are mutually interdependent.” The intertextual relationship is confirmed by the citations in Heb 1. It may also be noted that in Acts 13:33–34 the citation of Ps 2:7 is followed by a partial quotation of Isa 55:3: “I will give you the holy promises made to David,” which entails an indirect allusion

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6 Fragments 1, 21, 2. Steudel, Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie, 25, assigns this material to column 3 of her reconstructed text.
8 Ibid., 76.
9 Ibid.