

Hebrews by Donald A. Hagner

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(New international biblical commentary: Hebrews)

The commentary on the epistle to Hebrews by Donald A. Hagner is making its path to the Hall of Fame by its quality, exhaustiveness and by comprehensibility to the modern reader. By reading this book, I brought both duty and pleasure together, for it is CRA in Global University “BIB2033A – Study in the Book of Hebrews” course.

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Based on New International Version

1:

Introduction

- Author unknown.

It must be admitted, then, that the conclusions we draw about the readers, the author, and the circumstances that gave rise to this extraordinary book can only be tentative, not final.

The title “To the Hebrews” is first attested at the end of the second century (by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian).

2:

- Till the end of 19th century, scholars were convinced, that readers were of Jewish Christians.
- Some scholars argued, that first readers were Gentiles, because nothing about the content of the book necessitates Jewish readers.

3:

- Certain passages, however, seem particularly appropriate for Jewish readers
- And although we can have doubts (3:12 has to be interpreted as referring to “acts that lead to death”), we assume, that it were Judaists of a nonconformist variety.

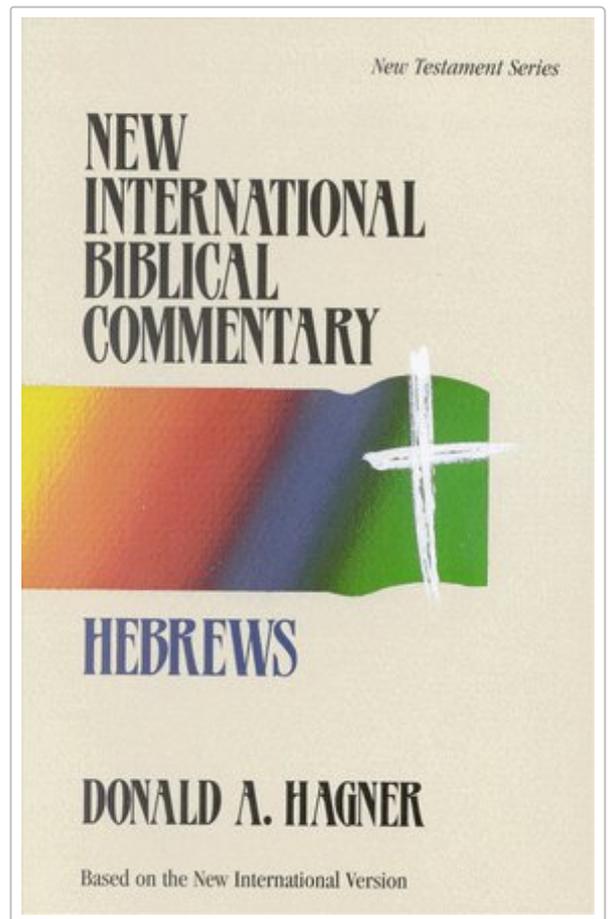
4:

Some scholars, indeed, argue for a mixed readership of both Jews and Gentiles! By virtue of its contents the book possesses a universal applicability.

5:

- Readers have suffered persecution (10:32ff),

But despite this honorable past, there seems to be evidence that they were weakening in their commitment, perhaps in the face of threat of new persecution. Although apparently they had not previously suffered martyrdom, perhaps this now loomed as a threatening possibility (10:35f.; 12:4).



...

They may have met together as a house church, but new pressures appear to have discouraged them from meeting this way (cf. 10:25). Indeed, perhaps the imminence of persecution caused them to separate themselves from the main body of Christians.

6:

- The letter could have been sent to Palestine Jews, to Alexandria or to churches of the Lycus Valles (to the Colossians). Each destination, however, involves certain degree of speculation. Palestine Jews, for instance, were hardly capable of generosity (6:10, 10:34, 13:16) (and would not receive very happily strongly Hellenistic epistle).

When all the data have been considered, Rome remains the most attractive hypothesis concerning the destination of the letter. But this view necessarily remains only a hypothesis.

7:

Date

- Two persecutions occurred to the Christians in Rome:
 - Claudius – Christians are expelled out of Rome.
 - Nero – AD 64, considerable life-losses doesn't fit very well into the description of persecution mentioned in the epistle.
 - Domitian – considerable life losses.
- There is no mention of destruction of the temple.

Considering these facts...

... we are drawn to a date somewhere in the early sixties.

9:

... the style of Greek in this book—the most elegant in the NT—is unlike that of any of the Pauline epistles.

... although the book itself was not by Paul, much of its contents were of a Pauline character. This, together with the mention of Timothy (13:23), suggests that the author was associated with the Pauline circle.

10:

- Luther suggested Apollos from Alexandria “who is described in Acts 19:24 as ‘a learned man,’ possessing ‘a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.’
- Tertullian suggested Barnabas, who was Levite from Cyprus, influenced by Hellenistic culture and Greek of the high caliber.

11:

Purpose

There can be no question but that it is a major and probably *the* major purpose of the book to warn the readers of a danger and to exhort them to faithfulness (thus the frequent applications, e.g., ...

...

Thus, the author understands that if the readers are to be motivated to remain faithful, they must come to an understanding of the true significance of Christianity. Accordingly, the author sets forth the incomparable superiority,

12:

together with the utter finality and definitive nature of God's work in Jesus Christ. Christianity rightly understood is thus absolute in character and universal in scope.

...

Christianity by its nature is far more than a new Jewish sect. It is of absolute and universal significance.

All other motifs in Hebrews are subordinate to this central purpose of the author.

13:

Form and structure

What we apparently have in the book of Hebrews, then, is a sermon-treatise that the author sent to an particular community as a letter.

It is a sermon treatise because of its distinctive combination of exhortation and argumentative discourse, but a letter because it is written for and sent to a specific community of Jewish Christians, probably in Rome.

In very general terms it may be said that the argument of the book proceeds from Christology (1:1–3:6) to the high priesthood of Jesus (4:14–5:10; 7:1–8:6), to the superiority of the new covenant and Christ's sacrificial work (8:7–10:18).

...

... 10:19 is regarded as a major turning point of the book. There is, to be sure, exhortation

14:

and application mixed in with the argument before this point, but in fact the heart of the epistle's main doctrinal argument is concluded with 10:18.

...

A further mark of the author's artistry (which in this case would seem to reveal a Jewish background) is the utilization of the OT and especially the midrashic treatment (i.e., practical exposition of the quotation, employing words taken from the quotation) of many of the quotations.

15:

Interpretation of the Old Testament

Yet because of the unity of God's saving purposes and the basic relationship of the past to the present as promise to fulfillment, the OT texts may be said to have a deeper or fuller sense (what theologians call *sensus plenior*), beyond what the Hebrew authors could be aware of because of their early position in the history of salvation.

The dawning of eschatological in Christ and the experience of fulfillment through his death and resurrection

16:

provide the writers of the NT, including the anonymous author of Hebrews, with a dramatically new point of orientation from which the OT can be read with new understanding.

- This reality shall does not justify arbitrary interpretations. The point is, that OT is viewed in light of intended fulfilment, which occurred in Christ Jesus.

Before Christ, no key was available to arrive at the ultimate intention and unity of Scripture

17:

Theological perspective

- cf. Acts 7

Certain theological emphases of the book, however, may stem from the Hellenistic-Jewish circle represented by Stephen.

...how much was he influenced by his Hellenism? In particular, to what degree, if at all, does he owe his unique perspective about heavenly archetypes and earthly copies to the Alexandrian Jew Philo? Philo's view of reality was derived from the dualistic idealism of Plato, in which for every object perceived with the senses there is a corresponding perfect, changeless archetypal "Idea" of "Form" that can be known only through the intellect. There is an obvious similarity between this perspective and that of our author when he speaks of earthly copies of heavenly realities (e.g., 8:1, 5; 9:11, 23, 24; 10:1; 11:1, 3).

18:

- cf. 8:5

... view of the earthly sanctuary of God as a copy of his heavenly sanctuary antedates Plato, being found within the Pentateuch (...). But more important is the fact that the dualism in Hebrews is not oriented toward the metaphysical questions of the philosophers.

- Historical and eschatological perspective of God's perfect and eternal purpose pushes Hebrews out of the perspective of Plato and Philo.

21:

§1 God's Definitive Revelation (Heb. 1:1–4)

He gives first his doctrine of Christ in order to set the tone for entire book.

22:

1:2 / In these last days (lit., “at the end of these days”)...

...

All that God did previously functions in a preparatory manner, pointing as a great arrow to the goal of Christ. ... Christ is the *telos*, the goal and ultimate meaning of all that preceded.

23:

1:3 / ... The Son (lit., “who”) **is the radiance of God's glory.**

... parallel exists between the personification of wisdom, this time in the apocryphal book the Wisdom of Solomon (7:25f.): “For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; ... she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness” (RSV).

24:

Philosophers of every age are prone to ask what it is that underlies reality—that is, what dynamic sustains and makes coherent all that exists. Our author, further revealing his christocentric perspective, finds the answer in the mighty word of the Son.

30:

§2 Christ Is Superior to the Angels in His Deity (Heb. 1:5–14)

- Idea of angels important in both Jewish and Greek thinking.
 - Greek: Gnosticism: Good spiritual God emanates in direction to its opposite: evil matter.
 - Jewish: Matter is good, however, God is Holy: remote and transcendent. That implies need of angelic intermediates.

31:

Our author's argument is that the ascension of the Son to the right hand of God gives him a unique position and name, marking him out as far superior to the angels.

- 1:5 – quotation of Psalm 2 – the royal Psalm used for the coronation of some Israelite king.

35:

What is in view is the eternity of the Son over against all that is transitory. The opening lines, **in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands**, ... The Son is identified as the Lord (Yahweh).

...

Angels are even less in view in this passage than in the preceding one. The Son is being extolled as God.

41:

§3 A Call to Faithfulness (Heb. 2:1–4)

2:4 / This message of salvation is no less true than the earlier message spoken by God on Sinai, ...

...

But the climatic sign of authenticity is the new outpouring of **gifts of the Holy Spirit**. Thus, like Peter at Pentecost (see Acts 2:14–18) our authors regards the Holy Spirit as the ultimate indicator of the fulfillment of God's promises and the dawning of the new era.

...

It can be foolish and dangerous for the readers to let themselves drift away from the truth.

43:

Additional notes §3

The reference to **gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will** recalls the identical Pauline view expressed in 1 Cor. 12:4, 11: “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” For both writers the very presence of these gifts of the Holy Spirit conveys the message of eschatological fulfillment, and thus testifies to the truthfulness of the Christian gospel.

45:

§4 Christ is Superior to the Angels Despite His Humanity (Heb. 2:5–9)

Our author struggles with the superiority of the Son in his authentic humanity.

2:6–8a /

...

... human beings look woefully insignificant: “When I consider your heavens ... the moon and the stars ... what is man?” At the same time ... humanity was given dominion over the rest of creation, ...

...

Our author understands the psalm [8:4–6] to refer to Christ, as well as to humanity, in this instance not merely because of the possible messianic associations of the psalm (...) but, rather, because he regards the Son as the archetypal human being.

...

The application of the psalm to Jesus was clearly facilitated by the words **son of man**, the title that Jesus himself preferred during his ministry. This title may be rendered as “mere man” (so GNB), which is indeed the nuance of the original Hebrew ...

46:

In him humanity has begun to realize its true inheritance.

- 2:8b-9 – first instance of midrashic treatment of an OT passage

... that is, where he presents an interpretation of the quotation, utilizing specific words drawn from the quotation itself. (See the same phenomenon in 3:7–4:11; 10:5–14; 12:5–11.)

47:

2:5 / ... Philo says that the Creator employs angels as his assistants and ministers for the care of mortals (*On Dreams* 1.22); according to 1 Enoch (89:59) seventy guardian angels have charge over the seventy nations (cf. Deut. 32:8 [LXX]; Dan. 10:20–21; Sirach 17:17). See Kohler, *JE*, col. 1, p. 594. This vice-regency, however, apparently does not hold true when the Son of Man, Jesus, has accomplished his work.

50:

§5 The Benefits of Christ's Humanity (Heb. 2:10–18)

- Christ became lower than the angels in order to fulfil God's plan.

In bringing many sons to glory expresses at once the purpose of the incarnation, suffering, and death of Jesus.

51:

2:11 / The work of Jesus, wherein he **makes** people **holy**, is accomplished by his death, which in turn depends upon his humanity (cf. the words of 10:10: “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”).

52:

2:13 / ...

...

If the Lord speaks to God, reasons our author, what else are we to understand but that Jesus here speaks to his Father? If this is true, then here are places where Jesus identifies himself with humanity rather than with God. He, like them, puts his **trust in him** (i.e., God); he associates himself with **the children God has given me**.

53:

2:15 /

...

Our author would agree with Paul's questions: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55). Jesus has come “to destroy the devil's work” (1 John 3:8), and presents himself to John in Revelation 1:18 in these words: “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold keys of death and Hades.”

Note: Direct context with v. 14 is obvious (that is what Hagner forgot to emphasise).

2:17 / ...

... The full humanity of Jesus enables him to perform the functions of a **high priest**. This is the first occurrence

54:

of what for the author is a most important title of Jesus, and one indeed that in the NT is applied to him only in Hebrews. A priest represents humanity before God (cf. 5:1), ...

- cf. v. 13

56:

Additional notes §5

- 2:14 – Hebrews as one of strongest opponents of docetism. Stress on the flesh and blood.

60:

§6 Christ Is Superior to Moses (Heb. 3:1–6)

3:3 /

...

The author in effect associates Jesus with the builder whereas Moses remains associated with the house.

...

3:5 /

...

Moses, as important as he was, served in a role of preparation, not one of fulfillment (cf. 11:39f.).

61:

...

In the reference to Jesus as **a son** (cf. 1:2, 5) and as the one who is **over God's** (lit., “his”) **house** we have an allusion to his deity. In Moses we have promise; in Son we have fulfillment, for in him God has accomplished his saving purposes.

64:

§7 An Exhortation Inspired by the Exodus (Heb. 3:7–19)

3:7–11 /

...

In particular, the exodus and the deliverance accomplished through the cross stand in special relationship. If the Jews were delivered from slavery in Egypt, God has through the cross delivered humanity from a greater slavery.

...

Our author would be in perfect accord with Paul when he writes: “these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us” (1 Cor. 10:11; cf. Rom. 15:4). The people that God led into wilderness had experienced the great deliverance of exodus and yet they fell away. Those who have experienced the redemption of the cross may find themselves in a similar situation.

67:

Additional notes §7

3:12 / ...

Can Jewish readers who revert back to their Judaism, as the recipients of this letter were apparently tempted to do, be described as turning **away from the living God**? Some have argued, that this expression necessarily indicates a non-Jewish readership. But for our author, who sees Christianity as the fulfillment of the promises, and therefore as true Judaism and not as another religion, to apostatize from Christianity *is* to turn away from the living God.

69:

§8 The Remaining Promise of Rest (Heb. 4:1–13)

4:2 /

... Hearing must be accompanied by believing.

Note: cf. Ro 10:17 !

70:

4:3 /

... two important premises our author is at pains to establish: (1) God's rest is a reality (vv. 3b-4), and (2) the Israelites were prohibited from entering that rest (the quotations in vv. 3 and 5).

71:

4:6 /

... Those who wandered in the wilderness **did not go in** (alluding to the original quotation), **because of their disobedience**.

...

4:7 / ... God (lit, “he”) **again set a certain day** for his rest to be entered into.

...

4:8 / Joshua did not give the people **rest**. For if that had occurred, the offer would not have been repeated **later** “through David” and there would have been no mention of **another day**.

...

4:9 / The promised rest, therefore, **remains . . . for the people of God** to enjoy. ... To enjoy the blessings of the eschaton is to participate in the sabbath–rest of God.

72:

4:10 / ...

In view here is the present experience of rest already available to the readers (the tense of the Greek verb is actually aorist, or past), a point the author intends to stress. ...

... it is unlikely that the works should be thought of as works-righteousness in the Pauline sense, so that rest is one of justification by faith.

Possibly by “works” the author may have in mind the activity of sacrificial ritual and the minutiae of ceremonial purity so important in the Judaism to which the readers were attracted. The most plausible interpretation, however, is that the author has in mind the ideal qualities of the sabbath-rest, namely peace, well-being, and security- ...

... peace and sense of ultimate security “which transcends all understanding” (Phil. 4:7).

75:

Additional Notes §8

4:4 / ... Unlike the description of the previous six days, the Genesis account of the seventh day makes no mention of evening. Jewish commentators concluded that God's sabbath-rest, which began after creation, lasted indefinitely.

79:

§9 The High Priesthood of Jesus (Heb. 4:14–5:10)

4:16 / ...

...

I keeping with the language of the cultus, this **throne of grace** is probably analogous in the author's mind to the mercy-seat in the holy of holies (cf. 9:5).

80:

5:5–6 / ...

...

This verse [Ps 110:1], although not quoted here, is elsewhere cited as referring to Jesus (1:13; and several allusions) and here may be understood as the bridge between Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4. Jesus is the Son of God by divine decree and therefore the one who has been raised to the right hand of God. He is thus at the same time the one appointed by God to be a **priest forever** in the lineage of Melkizedek.

- Hagner finds this insight one of authors most brilliant and unique in all the NT.

81:

5:8–9 / As a **son** o.e., even as God's Son, Jesus was not exempt from suffering. His **obedience** was not accomplished in ideal circumstances, but was **learned** !in the school of suffering (as NEB appropriately translates)..

83:

Additional notes §9

4:15 / ...

Tempted (*peirazō*) ... Although humanness as we know it /i.e., since the Fall) is inherently sinful, it does not follow that sin is intrinsic or essential to humanness.

§10 The Importance of Christian Maturity (Heb. 5:11–6:3)

90:

§11 The Seriousness of Apostasy (Heb. 6:5–12)

... the author is addressing a specific situation. He is not writing a calm, disinterested essay on the question of the perservance of the saints, in which he carefully details the full range of possibilities that confront the readers.

97:

§12 The Unchangeable Character of God's Purpose (Heb. 6:13–20)

... God has not changed course, nor have his purpose changed. In the definitive high priest, Jesus, God is bringing to pass his promises to the fathers of Israel.

98:

6:19–20 / Because of the nature of the Christian hope as confident expectation, hope serves as **an anchor for the soul**, and therefore as that which can counteract the tendency of “drifting away” mentioned in 2:1.

101:

§13 The Enigma of Melchizedek and His Priestly Order (Heb. 7:1–14)

7:1–2a / ... Melchizedek appears in the Genesis narrative as an extraordinary person, indeed, but not more than a human king and priest. The Salem, of which Melchizedek was king, was probably Canaanite Jerusalem. He is said to have been **priest of God Most High**, that is, of El Elyon, the head of the Canaanite pantheon. This God is seen to be the same as the God of Israel, as is evident from his description as the “Creator of heaven and earth” and the one who gave Abraham his victory (Gen. 14:19–20).

102:

7:2b–3 / ...

Because there is no record of Melchizedek's, nor therefore of the termination of his priesthood (or of any succession to it), the conclusion can be drawn that **he remains a priest forever**. As far as what Scripture says and does not say about Melchizedek, then, it is evident that he is **like the Son of God**, who also is without beginning of days or end of life and whose priesthood therefore is eternally valid (cf. v. 17 with quotation of Ps. 110:4).

7:4–6 / ...

His priesthood accordingly is of an exceptional character.

105:

Additional notes §13

Jewish eschatological expectation (e.g., Qumran) looked for a priestly and royal messiah. In Christ the two are combined, and Melchizedek as king and high priest serves as a type or an anticipation of Christ.

106:

... but even in their eschatological expectations many Jews looked for the appearance of a high priest from the line of Levi. Indeed, Judaizing groups in the early church continued to stress the importance of the tribe of Levi, as well as Judah, in eschatological expectation.

107:

7:12 / ... The word **change** (*metathesis*) means more than a slight modification (the same word occurs in 11:5 and 12:27, where it connotes removal). As we learn from v. 18 and 8:7, 13, what is meant is essentially an abrogation of the law, paradoxically by its fulfillment in Christ—to whom it pointed all along.

111:

§14 The Legitimacy and Superiority of Christ's Priesthood (Heb. 7:15–28)

7:27 / ... This shocking fact—that this high priest offers *himself* in sacrifice—here is mentioned directly for the first time (but cf. 2:9, 14; 5:8), becomes a central argument in 9:11–28. The definitive, once-and-for-all, character of the work of Christ is of course a hallmark of the epistle to the Hebrews.

§15 The True High Priest and His Ministry (Heb. 8:1–6)

122:

§16 The Promise of a New Covenant (Heb. 8:7–13)

The author now cites an OT passage of major importance in the epistle, Jeremiah 31:31–34. The explicit reference to the new covenant in this text makes it clear for his purpose.

...

The quotation enables the author to stress the discontinuity between Christianity and the Mosaic law, while at the same time indicating an underlying continuity on God's purposes.

...

8:7–8a / ... This assignment of the real blame to the people rather than to the first covenant is somewhat reminiscent of

Paul's vindication of the law in Romans 7:7–12.

8:8b-12 /

123:

The old covenant was unable to produce obedience, and hence judgement came upon the nation (**and I turned away from them**). The new covenant, however, will accomplish what the old could not do: it will produce true righteousness (**I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts**), the personal knowledge of the Lord, and effective forgiveness of sins.

128:

§17 The Old Testament Ritual Described (Heb. 9:1–10)

9:3–5 / ...

...

With their wings, these beings overshadowed **the atonement cover** (see Exod. 25:18–20). This is NIV's appropriate translation of a single technical term (*hilastērion*) indicating the lid of the ark (as it does regularly in the LXX). This cover to the ark was the place where the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed bull and then of the goat on the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 16:14f.). In this way the word came to signify the taking away of sin (as indeed an alternate rendering of consonants of the Hebrew word *kpr* allows, that is, not only “to cover”, but “to wipe away”) and hence came to be translated “mercy seat” (Exod. 26:34, RSV). In Romans 3:25, the only other occurrence of this noun in the NT, Jesus is described as an “expiation” (RSV) or “propitiation” (KJV, NASB) for our sins, or as NIV puts it, “a sacrifice of atonement”.

130:

9:9–10 / ... By its very nature the old covenant points to what can now be seen to be its fulfillment. ... various sacrificial offerings ... were by their nature unable to bring the worshiper to the intended goal of full salvation. **Were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper** is to be understood as “unable to bring the true, inner person to the intended goal of full salvation”. The nagging, unconvinced conscience of the worshiper in this circumstance is evidence of this failure of the old system.

131:

Christ fulfills the anticipation of the old covenant and brings his people to the realization of the salvation God had intended from the beginning. The new era, the time of reformation and fulfillment, has arrived.

136:

§18 The Definitive Nature of Christ's Work (Heb. 9:11–14)

9:14 / But the incomparably superior **blood of Christ** brings about the reality of a far more significant cleansing. Christ **offered himself unblemished** (lit., “blameless”) **to God**, and this was done **through the eternal Spirit** ...

§19 Christ's Sacrifice: The Foundation of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15–22)

§20 Christ and His Work: The Final Answer to Sin

§21 The Ineffectiveness of the Law (Heb. 10:1–4)

154:

§22 Old and New in Psalm 40:6–8 (Heb. 10:5–10)

With Christ as his hermeneutical key, he expounds the deeper meaning of the text, which can now be seen retrospectively in a new way through the fulfillment brought by Christ.

156:

10:9–10 / ...

This one sacrifice is the counterpart to, and fulfills altogether, the entire catalogue of animal sacrifices rejected in Psalm 40:6–7. For it is Jesus who has come to do the will of God, and in agreement with the teaching of the Scriptures: “it is written about me in the scroll.” All of the OT in one way or another points to or prepares for the fulfillment of God's saving purposes accomplished through Christ.

§23 The Perfect Offering and the Fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31–34 (Heb. 10:11–18)

163:

§24 The Grounds for Faithfulness (Heb. 10:19–25)

With his central theological argument concluded, the author turns now to some practical applications of what he has so effectively argued.

164:

10:19–21 / ...

But now it is evident that **a new and living way** has been **opened for us** (cf. John 14:6).

This way is obviously **new**, in both it means and its effects. ... This new way goes **through the curtain** that divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Holy Place or sanctuary. And now the author finds a rich symbolism in this reference to **the curtain** by identifying it with Christ's **body** (lit., “flesh”). Probably the author here alludes to the tradition about the tearing of the curtain in two at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus—a tradition that eventually found its way into all three Synoptic Gospels.

...

The tearing of the curtain symbolized the opening of direct access to God's presence accomplished by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

165:

10:22 / ...

Bodies washed with pure water refers not to Jewish lustrations (ceremonial washings for purification [e.g., 6:2]), but almost certainly to Christian baptism, which reference has just been made (cf. 1 Pet. 3:21; Eph. 5:26).

...

10:24–25 / ... It is worth noting that we have encountered the three great virtues of faith (v. 22), hope (v. 23), and love in three successive verses (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13).

169:

§25 The Sin of Apostasy and the Reality of Judgement (Heb. 10:26–31)

10:26–27 / The words of **we deliberately keep on sinning** do not refer to ordinary sins, but to the most grievous and final sin, apostasy.

...

But for those who have turned their backs on the sacrifice of Christ—the sacrifice to which all other sacrifices pointed and upon which they depended for their temporary efficacy—then **no sacrifice for sins is left**.

170:

10:28–29 / ... Apostasy means that **the Son of God**—Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant—is counted worthless and treated with contempt. **Unholy thing** is literally “common”. Apostasy means that **the blood of the covenant** is reckoned to be common or unholy—this despite the fact that this blood **sanctified him** (lit., “by which he was sanctified”). The apostate is one who **has insulted the Spirit of grace**. Apostasy is the equivalent of the unforgivable sin, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (e.g., Matt. 12:31f.).

175:

§26 An Exhortation to Endurance and Faithfulness (Heb. 10:32–39)

10:37–38 / ... Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted here, but not with the same meaning as when Paul cites it in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 (cf. RSV's effective translation of Hab. 2:4 in these verses). In these passages the stress is upon how a person becomes righteous, namely, by faith. Here, however, the stress is upon the faithfulness of the righteous person: **my righteous one will live by faith**. That is, righteous people will live faithfully, their lives will be lived in accordance with their faith. These two emphases are complementary rather than contradictory. The possibility of our faith (whereby we are accounted righteous) and our faithfulness (whereby we live according to God's will) are both based upon the faithfulness of God on our behalf.

§27 The Nature and Importance of Faith (Heb. 11:1–3)

§28 The Faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah (Heb. 11:4–7)

187:

Additional Notes §28

11:7 /

The reality of unseen is a controlling theme in the present chapter, as can be seen from the following list:

v. 1-things hoped for, but not yet seen

3-creation from what cannot be seen

6-that God exists and rewards

7-events yet unseen

8-an unknown country

10-the city with permanent foundations (cf. 13:14)

13-from a long way off they saw (the things God promised)

14-looking for a country

16-the heavenly country

26-kept his eyes on the future reward

27-as though he saw the invisible God

§29 The Faith of Abraham and Sarah (Heb. 11:8–12)

§30 The Transcendent Nature of Hope (Heb. 11:13–16)

§31 Abraham's Offering of Isaac and the Faith of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (Heb. 11:17–22)

§32 The Faith of Moses and the Israelites (Heb. 11:23–29)

§33 The Faith of Rahab and Countless Others (Heb. 11:30–40)

211:

§34 Looking to Jesus as the Perfect Pattern (Heb. 12:1–3)

But the author now comes to the supreme example of this kind of faith in Jesus—the name that must be the climax of any list of paragons of faith. Jesus himself endured great suffering without losing sight of the glory that was to come.

...

12:1 / ... One clear obstacle to the life of faith, however, is **the sin that so easily entangles**. The relation between sin and unbelief has already been

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the subject of our author's attention (cf. 3:12, 18f.). The believers susceptibility to sin (cf. Rom. 7:21) must not be allowed to thwart them in their pursuit of the goal (cf. 11:25).

...

12:2 / ... Christ is so central both to the promise and to the fulfillment, because he brings into existence the hoped-for *telos* (and is therefore the **perfecter** of faith), he is also the “originator” or “founder” of faith.

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§35 The Purpose of Chastening (Heb. 12:4–11)

12:4 / ****Struggle against sin** here signifies as the context indicates, not the battle of the Christian to keep from sinning (cf. v. 1), but the struggle to avoid apostazing.

§36 A Challenge to Holiness and Faithfulness (Heb. 12:12–17)

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§37 The Glory of the Christian's Present Status (Heb. 12:18–24)

12:24 / ...

Christ's atoning blood speaks of the end of the old covenant and the establishment of the new. It is this blood that has brought the readers to the benefits of the new covenant and to their present glorious status wherein they have begun to experience the fulfillment, the goal of God's saving purposes, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

§38 A Final Warning Concerning Rejection (Heb. 12:25–29)

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§39 A Call to Ethical Living (Heb. 13:1–4)

13:1 / ... The particular stress here upon love between Christian **brothers** also appears, for example, in John 13:34; Romans 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; and 1 Peter 1:22. ... Love is always shown in concrete acts—acts such as the author now mentions.

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§40 The Security of the Believer (Heb. 13:5–6)

13:5 / ... This is again a common theme in the NT (cf. 1 Tim. 6:6ff., where Christians are exhorted to remain content with the bare necessities of life). ... They are to find their security totally in God.

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§41 A Call to Faithfulness and a Warning Against False Teaching (Heb. 13:7–9)

13:8 / ... His work of **yesterday**, the sacrificial and atoning work as high priest, has been expounded at length by our author. That is the very basis of Christianity. Today his work continues in the intercession he makes for us at the right hand of God (7:25; cf. 4:14–16). It is also true, as a kind of surplus, that the future of the readers remains secure. The faithfulness of Christ in the past and present will find its counterpart in the future when he returns to consummate saving purposes of God (9:28). The faithfulness of Jesus Christ is unchanging (cf. 7:24) and is thus something upon which the readers may depend in living the life of faith.

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§42 Christ's Sacrifice and the Spiritual Sacrifices of Christians (Heb. 13:10–16)

13:10–11 / ... Just as priests could not eat of those animals, so they cannot partake of the sacrifice which they foreshadowed. ... That is, within the framework of the old system, they cannot partake of the fulfillment brought by the sacrifice of Christ.

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13:12–13 / ... The crucifixion—that fulfillment of the OT sacrifices wherein he made **the people holy through his own blood**—took place outside the city walls (John 19:20; cf. Matt. 21:39). This analogy is now given an application to the readers in the author's exhortation to join Jesus **outside the camp**.

§43 Obedience to Church Leaders and a request for Prayer (Heb. 13:17–19)

§44 A Concluding Prayer (Heb. 13:20–21)

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§45 Postscript and Final Benediction (Heb. 13:22–25)

13:25 / ... The determinative word is **grace** (*charis*), that one word that is quintessential to the Christian gospel and to every message given to the church by God's spokespersons—including this letter of exhortation by an anonymous author to Jewish Christians who have come to the new covenant through the grace of Jesus Christ.

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