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THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF HEBREWS 11  
IN LIGHT OF ITS LITERARY FORM

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Theology

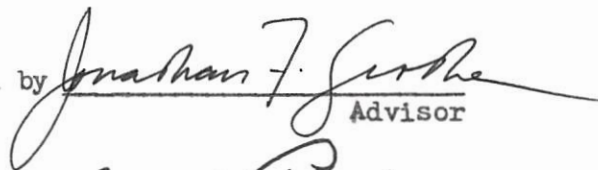
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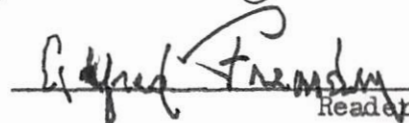
by

Merland Ray Miller

May 1984

Approved by

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader

This dissertation is gratefully dedicated

to

Any One Who

takes the time to read it

## ABBREVIATIONS

AGD--Arndt, Gingrich and Danker, Lexicon

AT--Alten Testament

ATR--A. T. Robertson, Grammar

Bl-D--Blass and Debrunner, Grammar

CD--Covenant of Damascus

Clem.--Clement of Rome, Letter to the Corinthians

Clem Alex--Clement of Alexandria

D-M--Dana and Mantey, Grammar

GNB--Good News Bible

HbNT--Hebrew New Testament, trans. Franz Delitzsch

KJV--King James Version

lat--majority of Latin versions

ICL--Loeb Classical Library

LXX--Septuagint

M-M--Moulton and Milligan, Lexicon

MT--Masoretic Text

N.F.--Neue Folge

NIDNT--Brown, Theological Dictionary

NIV--New International Version

NT--New Testament

OT--Old Testament

RSV--Revised Standard Version

syr--syriac versions

TDNT--Kittel, Theological Dictionary

vg--The Latin Vulgate version

v.l.--variant reading

( )<sup>\*</sup> --original hand of a manuscript

( )<sup>c</sup> --correcting hand of a manuscript

( )<sup>gr</sup> --Greek hand of a bilingual manuscript

( )<sup>ms</sup> --certain manuscripts of a version

All other abbreviations conform to Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, MIA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations. New York: Modern Language Association, 1980.

All quotations of Scripture, unless otherwise designated, are the author's own translation.

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## INTRODUCTION

C. Spicq has called the eleventh chapter of Hebrews "famous and moving . . . eloquent and majestic. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Its attraction for preachers, theologians and even literary critics has indeed been great. Nonetheless, a full-scale study with the express purpose of defining the literary form of Hebrews 11 has not been attempted. The present work is intended to meet this need.

The scope of this study does not end with literary form, however. Too often in the past the study of literary form has been either consciously or unconsciously divorced from the study of theological argument. The hypothesis of this paper is that an understanding of literary form will aid in determining and illuminating theological argument.

The material for the study of literary form will be the text in Hebrews itself, along with the prior extant texts whose literary structure and characteristics are similar to Hebrews 11. The existence of literary material lying behind the present text is conjectural and beyond the scope of this study.

Several steps will be demanded in determining the literary form of Hebrews 11. First of all, it must be determined if chapter 11 by itself is a complete literary unit or if it requires

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<sup>1</sup> C. Spicq, L'Épître Aux Hébreux, 2nd ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda & Co., 1952-53), II, 334.



12:1-2 to fill it out literarily and theologically. That the opening of the twelfth chapter is needed is implied by F. F. Bruce when he claims that Hebrews uses the examples of the heroes of faith to trace salvation-history up to its fulfillment in Jesus.<sup>2</sup> This implication will be explored by examining the passage within the structure of the book as a whole, by detailing the frequency of certain theological concepts and by analyzing the inferential particle with which chapter 12 begins.

It will be necessary to determine, if possible, the literary form of the book of Hebrews as a whole in order to appreciate the place of 11:1-12:2 within the book. The major possibilities will be examined and a working hypothesis suggested.

The literary elements of the passage will be determined by an examination of the structure and characteristics of passages similar to Heb. 11:1-12:2. The foundation for locating such passages has been well laid by scholars who have rightly looked to the Jewish literature, both canonical and extra-canonical, for the background of Hebrews. In addition to strictly Jewish literature, passages from the New Testament and Clement of Rome will be considered.<sup>3</sup> In examining these passages, special attention will be

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<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition and Notes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> For a full-scale development of the use of Scripture in Clement of Rome see Donald Alfred Hagner, The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

given to the use of inferential particles to signal exhortation, since the exhortation in Heb. 12:1-2 is thus signaled.

The first of three literary elements drawn from the Jewish background is the historical summary. Rudolf Bultmann identifies this as one of the conventional forms of preaching which the earliest Church borrowed from Judaism. He calls them "Summaries of the history of God's people (Ueberblicke ueber die Geschichte des Gottesvolkes) which point out the divine theology of that history. . . ."<sup>4</sup> The more specific technical term Geschichtsueberblick is used by Thyen as the title for a subsection in his study of the style of Jewish-Hellenistic homilies.<sup>5</sup>

The other two elements found in Jewish literature are combined by Bultmann in a second "conventional form of preaching": "Series of examples (Aufreihungen von Beispielen) collected from history according to a particular catch-word (Stichwort)."<sup>6</sup> These two forms are probably the most obvious literary characteristics of Hebrews 11. The former, Beispielreihe (translated "example-series") has been noted consistently in studies of the passage.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 96; original from Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1965), I, 98.

<sup>5</sup> Hartwig Thyen, Der Stil der juedisch-hellenistischen Homilie (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), pp. 111-115.

<sup>6</sup> Bultmann, Theology, I, 96; original Theologie, I, 98.

<sup>7</sup> e.g., Spicq Hébreux, Thyen, Bruce Hebrews, Hagner.

The latter, Stichwort (translated "catchword") is notable in Hebrews 11 for the extent of its use.

While the literary elements of the passage are drawn from the Jewish background, it is the Graeco-Roman world and its literary tradition which is the basis for the suggestion that Heb. 11:1-12:2 is an encomium. The first serious suggestion of this literary form comes from Leland Ryken. Ryken defines an encomium as "a work of literature written in praise of someone or something."<sup>8</sup> He points to standard encomiastic methods used in the passage and claims that the subject of the encomium is faith.

The thesis that Hebrews 11:1-12:2 is an encomium receives implicit support from T. R. Lee, who proposes that Sirach 44-50 is an encomium on the high priest Simon II. The similarity of the two passages has been noted by numerous commentators, including G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley<sup>9</sup> as well as Norbert Peters, Vinzenz Hamp, Irénée Fransen.<sup>10</sup> Lee defines the structure and characteristics of classical encomia and demonstrates how they fit in Sirach 44-50.

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<sup>8</sup> Leland Ryken, The Literature of the Bible (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1974), p. 201; Ryken devotes an entire chapter to "Biblical Encomium" (pp. 201-214), including in this category such passages as Psalm 1 and 1 Cor. 13.

<sup>9</sup> G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Book of Sirach" in Robert Henry Charles, ed., The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 479.

<sup>10</sup> Cited by T. R. Lee, Studies in the Form of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 44-50 (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union and University of California, 1979), p. 87, n. 79.

It will be proposed in chapter one of this study that Heb. 11:1-12:2 is an encomium on Jesus, combining the thesis of Lee (Sirach 44-50 is an encomium on Simon II) with that of Ryken (Heb. 11:1-12:2 is an encomium on faith). This thesis will be demonstrated by evaluating how the structure and characteristics of classical encomia fit the passage, and by comparing the passage with Sirach 44-50.

The theological argument of Heb. 11:1-12:2 will be determined exegetically. The passage will be examined using the syntactical method of text analysis to determine the major assertions of the author.<sup>11</sup> Direct theological statements will be analyzed in greater detail. Finally, word studies on major theological concepts will determine how the theology developed throughout Hebrews is specifically applied in 11:1-12:2.

The conclusion of the study will show how the literary form affects the theological argument. The manner in which the author uses encomiastic methods will be detailed from the text and the support thereby given to the theological argument will be demonstrated.

In summary of the main points of the study, the hypothesis is that an understanding of the literary form of the passage will aid in determining theological argument. In chapter one it will be shown that the literary form of the passage is that of an encomium

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<sup>11</sup> This method is defined and illustrated by Walter Kaiser, Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

on Jesus. In chapter two it will be demonstrated that the theological argument of the passage is that faith is the means of endurance. In the conclusion it will be argued that the literary elements in Heb. 11:1-12:2 support the theology by (1) portraying faith as the means of endurance and (2) making Jesus the object of faith. The specific thesis of the dissertation is: the literary form of the encomium in Heb. 11:1-12:2 contributes to showing that Jesus is the object of faith, which is the means of endurance.

CHAPTER 1  
THE LITERARY FORM OF HEBREWS 11

The thesis of this chapter is that the literary form of Heb. 11:1-12:2 is that of an encomium on Jesus. This means that encomium is the principal form in a passage which also includes historical summary, example-series and catchword. Stated another way, the author employs an encomiastic use of historical summary with an example-series, structured around "faith" (πίστις) as the catchword.

The strategy for proving this thesis will be to examine first the possible literary form of Hebrews as a whole. The working hypothesis will be that the book is a written sermon.

Secondly, possible literary forms for Hebrews 11 will be examined. The literary options of the author will be explored by considering forms which arise out of the literature of the Graeco-Roman and Jewish cultures. The conclusions of this investigation will be: (1) that the elements found in the passage which are drawn from Jewish literature are historical summary, example-series and catchword, and (2) that the major literary form arising out of the Graeco-Roman literature is the encomium. These conclusions will be supported by examining passages from Jewish literature which contain the three forms and by defining "encomium" and pointing out encomiastic elements in Heb. 11:1-12:2.

In conjunction with the consideration of encomium a comparison will be made between Heb. 11:1-12:2 and Sirach 44-50, a passage which has been called an encomium. The thesis that Sirach 44-50 is an encomium on Simon ben-Onias will be correlated with the thesis that Heb. 11:1-12:2 is an encomium on faith. The result of this correlation will be a combination of the two theses leading to the conclusion that Heb. 11:1-12:2 is an encomium on Jesus. Finally, this conclusion will be supported by an examination of literary and theological elements within the passage itself.

#### I. The Literary Form of Hebrews as a Whole

A necessary prerequisite to determining the form of Hebrews 11 will be an understanding of the literary form of the book as a whole. The title of the book in the Textus Receptus, "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews" (Ἡ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ), assumes an epistolary form.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Hebrews does contain epistolary elements in the conclusion, 13:22-25. To settle for "epistle" as the literary form, however, is to fail to take full account of the evidence within the book itself.

A comparison of the self-description of Hebrews as a "word of

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<sup>1</sup> The designation ἐπιστολή was not dropped until the 1842-1850 edition of Lachmann; see The Englishman's Greek New Testament; giving The Greek Text of Stephens 1550, with the Various Readings of the Editions of Elzevir 1624, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and Wordsworth; together with an Interlinear Literal Translation and The Authorized Version of 1611 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 560.

exhortation" (τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως , 13:22) with the use of the same phrase in Acts 13:15 (λόγος παρακλήσεως ) points to the literary genre "homily" or "sermon." Indeed, Hartwig Thyen, in his study of the Hellenistic-Jewish homily, classifies Hebrews as such.<sup>2</sup>

Thyen links Hebrews with other Jewish-Hellenistic homilies particularly with respect to the use of the Old Testament and paraenesis.<sup>3</sup> Hebrews uses the Septuagint as its main source of Old Testament citations, in line with the Hellenistic synagogue.<sup>4</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Hebrews follows a technique of the Hellenistic synagogue which differs from that of the Rabbis:

While the Rabbis most often marshal their Scripture-proofs by gathering Scripture passages under the keyword provided in the concept to be proven, it is the peculiarity of the Hellenistic Jews to set side by side persons from the OT as witnesses and only then to arrange the corresponding citations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Der Stil der Juedisch-Hellenistischen Homilie (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), pp. 16-18.

<sup>3</sup> Thyen relies on Dibelius' definition of paraenesis: "By hortatory literature is meant that various exhortations, frequently without inner connection, are strung together and addressed to a single locality." Martin Dibelius, A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Thyen, pp. 64-65.

<sup>5</sup> Waehrend die Rabbinen ihre Schriftbeweise meistens fuehren, indem sie Schriftstellen unter dem durch den zu beweisenden Begriff mitgegebenen Stichwort sammeln, ist es die Eigenart der hellenistischen Juden, Personen aus dem AT als Zeugen nebeneinanderzustellen



This use of Old Testament witnesses is especially obvious in Hebrews 11.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the use of paraenesis, Thyen observes:

Since already in the Diaspora synagogue cultic-ritual (considerations) had very definitely receded into the background in relation to ethical (considerations), the Christian church was able much more easily to take over the Jewish paraenesis.<sup>7</sup>

According to Thyen, paraenetic elements are found throughout Hebrews. For instance, the use of the term ἀδελφοί (3:1, 12; 10:19);<sup>8</sup> the use of "we" (10:24-25; 12:1-2);<sup>9</sup> the connection of exposition and exhortation by inferential particles or phrases (2:1-- Διὰ τοῦτο ; 4:1--οὖν ; 12:1--Τοιγαροῦν );<sup>10</sup> and illustrations from everyday life (5:12-14; 12:1).<sup>11</sup> The fact that Hebrews ends with paraenesis (10:19-13:21) is for Thyen evidence that it follows the pattern of the Jewish-Hellenistic homily.<sup>12</sup>

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und sodann erst die entsprechenden Zitate einzuordnen, Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 18, 76.

<sup>7</sup> Weil schon in der Synagoge der Diaspora das Kultisch-Ritu-  
elle gegenueber dem Sittlichen sehr stark in den Hintergrund ge-  
treten war, konnte die christliche Kirche die juedische Paraenese  
um so leichter uebernehmen, Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> Thyen, p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 91, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 106; in Thyen's view ch. 11 is an excursus. While  
ch. 13 may be paraenesis by Dibelius's definition, 10:19-12:29 can  
hardly be classed as "various exhortations . . . strung together."  
The exegesis of 11:1-12:2 given in ch. 2 of this paper will show  
that that passage is carefully constructed.

Thyen's arguments are persuasive,<sup>13</sup> but an important qualification needs to be observed. There is evidence that Hebrews is a letter as well as a sermon. Besides the greetings and personal information in 13:22-25, the writer states in verse 22: "I have written a letter unto you in few words: (KJV, καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν ). The verb ἐπιστέλλω indicates clearly that this "sermon" was sent by letter.<sup>14</sup>

In light of the evidence given above, it is clear that Hebrews cannot be classified literarily simply as a letter or simply as a sermon. Perhaps the best way to express the literary form of Hebrews is to call it a "Christian synagogue sermon by mail."<sup>15</sup> Whether the sermon was delivered first, then committed to writing along with a covering letter (13:22-25), or initially written out with the intention of having it read in the congregation to which it was sent is a question which cannot be resolved on the basis of the available evidence.

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<sup>13</sup> Erich Graesser, in reviewing scholarly opinion on Hebrews, claims that the vast preponderance of scholarship agrees on the influence of the Jewish-Hellenistic synagogue sermon on Hebrews because of Thyen's work; "Der Herbraeerbrief 1938-1963," Theologische Rundschau 30 (1964), p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> Thyen contends that the final verses were added when the homily was sent as a written communication, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> I am indebted for this happy appellation to Dr. Jonathan F. Grothe, my dissertation advisor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. For a concise survey of suggested literary forms for Hebrews, see Floyd V. Filson, 'Yesterday': A Study of Hebrews In the Light of Chapter 13 (Naperville, IL: Alec. R. Allenson, 1967), pp. 16-21.

## II. The Literary Options of the Author of Hebrews

With a working hypothesis for the literary form of the book of Hebrews as a whole, the major concern of this chapter, the literary form of Hebrews 11, can now be addressed. What were the literary options of the author of Hebrews? What literary forms might he have chosen? Involved with this question is the broader issue of the relative importance of the major cultural influences on the New Testament, the Graeco-Roman and the Jewish.

### A. The Graeco-Roman and Jewish background

The Hellenization of the Mediterranean world was the vision of Alexander the Great. From the time of his death in the late fourth century B.C., there were those who shared his vision and labored to bring it about despite the reluctance of their subjects.

Among the groups reluctant to be Hellenized were the Jews. They became divided among themselves and grouped into the "Hellenistic" and "Hebraistic" camps still found in the New Testament (Acts 6:1). The differentiation of "Palestinian" and "Diaspora" Judaism also reflects this conflict of religion and culture.

A result of the Hellenizing of Jews was the acquaintance of Jewish teachers and writers with Greek literature and its literary forms. One of these literary forms was the encomium. Since it will be argued that this form is used in Heb. 11:1-12:2, a full

treatment of it will be given below. Here the diatribe form and the use of examples will be considered.

F. F. Bruce, in commenting on Graeco-Roman influence on Hebrews 11, mentions the diatribe form:

. . . the literary genre is by no means confined to the Judaeo-Christian tradition; it shares many characteristics with the diatribé of Stoic-influenced rhetoric, which was given to the accumulation of historical or legendary examples of the particular quality under discussion.<sup>16</sup>

Several traits of Hebrews show the influence of the diatribe: the "catalog of circumstances" (11:36-38);<sup>17</sup> anaphora (repetition of  $\pi\acute{\iota}\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota$  in chapter 11);<sup>18</sup> rhythmic clauses;<sup>19</sup> rhetorical questions (1:5; 11:32);<sup>20</sup> association with addressees in reacting to a citation (13:6).<sup>21</sup> Despite these similarities, Thyen admits that the Hellenistic synagogue sermon does not have the form of a diatribe.<sup>22</sup>

A very important aspect of similarity between the Graeco-

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<sup>16</sup> F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition and Notes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 280, his emphasis. Bruce here lists Thyen's work as a source. Indeed, Thyen's first chapter is entitled: "Die synagogale Homilie und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe," pp. 40-63.

<sup>17</sup> Peristasenkataloge; Thyen, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 53, 73.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>22</sup> Thyen cites particularly the more serious and pointed tone

Roman tradition and Hebrews, for this study, is the use of examples. Spicq addresses this point:

From the end of the Augustan age, under the influence of Sextius, the rhetoricians and great lecturers liked to choose examples of virtue from among the national heroes. The ancients were especially qualified to furnish moral lessons. How much more is the history of God's people rich in models of faith and endurance!<sup>23</sup>

The concept of the educational benefit of historical examples goes at least as far back as Plato:

. . . a third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses. This takes hold upon a gentle and pure soul, arouses it and inspires it to songs and other poetry, and thus by adorning countless deeds of the ancients educates later generations.<sup>24</sup>

In the legal profession, the advantage of historical precedent was always acknowledged. Its moral application was also recognized by Cicero: "Furthermore, in convincing a sufferer that he is able and ought to bear the accidents of fortune, it is helpful to recount

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and more frequent use of second person plural in the Jewish-Hellenistic homilies, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> Dès la fin du siècle d'Auguste, sous l'influence de Sextius, les rhéteurs et les grands diatribistes aiment choisir les exemples de vertus parmi les héros de l'histoire nationale. Les ancêtres sont spécialement qualifiés pour fournir des leçons de morale. Combien davantage l'histoire du peuple de Dieu, est-elle riche en modèles de foi et de patience! C. Spicq, L'Épître Aux Hébreux, 2nd ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda & Co., 1952-53), I, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Plato, Phaedrus 245A; ICL p. 469.

the examples of those who have done so."<sup>25</sup> In his textbook on oratory Quintilian (an orator not nearly as renowned as Cicero, but a contemporary of Apostles nonetheless) spells out the importance of examples:

Above all, our orator should be equipped with a rich store of examples both old and new: and he ought not merely to know those which are recorded in history or transmitted by oral tradition or occur from day to day, but should not neglect even those fictitious examples invented by the great poets. For while the former have the authority of evidence or even of legal decisions, the latter also either have the warrant of antiquity or are regarded as having been invented by great men to serve as lessons to the world. He should therefore be acquainted with as many examples as possible. It is this which gives old age so much authority, since the old are believed to have a larger store of knowledge and experience, as Homer so frequently bears witness. But we must not wait till the evening of our days, since study has the advantage that, as far as knowledge of facts is concerned, it is capable of giving the impression that we have lived in ages long gone by.<sup>26</sup>

An example of a Graeco-Roman historical summary is found in Plutarch. In one section of his Moralia he gives six examples, introducing them in the following words: "It is a good thing, too, to contemplate those men who nobly and high-mindedly and calmly have been resigned to the deaths which have befallen their sons. . . ."<sup>27</sup> He then gives as examples Anaxagoras of Clazomenae,

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<sup>25</sup> Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 4.29; ICL p. 401.

<sup>26</sup> Quintilian, Training of an Orator 12.4; ICL IV, 407, 409.

<sup>27</sup> Plutarch, Letter to Apollonius 33; ICL II, 193-94.

Pericles, Xenophon the Socratic, Dion of Syracuse, Demosthenes of Athens and King Antigonus. A paragraph is devoted to each, and the names of four constitute the initial word of their paragraph. Plutarch concludes with: "The whole world wonders at these men and admires them for their nobility of mind . . . there are so many examples, which have been handed down to us through both Greek and Roman history. . . ."28

Yet there is something decidedly different about Hebrews 11. One aspect of this difference is aptly summarized by Spicq:

The importance which our author attaches to this pedagogical argument is revealed in the dignity which he gives to this portrait-gallery and the extraordinary fervor of his tone. It is truly as a preacher and not as a rhetorician that he presents these great ancestors for the contemplation of the believers. This is his originality among his contemporaries. . . .<sup>29</sup>

Much more than dignity and tone, however, sets Hebrews apart from the Graeco-Roman tradition. A Hellenistic Jew he may be, but a Jew nonetheless. Therefore his use of examples is less a matter of paradigms of virtue than of rehearsal of salvation-history. If Philo is an example of a Jewish writer who draws heavily upon Graeco-

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; ICL II, 199.

<sup>29</sup> L'importance que notre auteur attache à cet argument pédagogique se révèle à l'ampleur qu'il donne à cette galerie de portraits et à la ferveur extraordinaire de son accent. C'est vraiment en prédicateur et non en rhéteur qu'il propose ces grands ancêtres à la contemplation des croyants. Là est son originalité parmi ses contemporains. Spicq, L'Épître Aux Hébreux, I, 19.

Roman thought,<sup>30</sup> Hebrews demonstrates the greater influence on New Testament writers of the Old Testament and intertestamental Judaism.

Within the Jewish tradition, the salvation-history survey reaches as far back as Moses and is still present within the New Testament and Clement of Rome. Thyen's term for this form is "Geschichtsuoberblick," or historical summary.<sup>31</sup> Several examples of historical summary exist, both canonical and extra-canonical. They are characterized by three elements. The first of these is exhortation.<sup>32</sup> The other two elements are called by Bultmann: "Series of examples (Aufreihungen von Beispielen) collected from history according to a particular catchword (Stichwort)."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> E.g., On Rewards and Punishments 114: "For to gaze continually upon noble models imprints their likeness in souls which are not entirely hardened and stony," ICL VIII, 381.

<sup>31</sup> Thyen, p. 111. Bultmann also, in pointing out two "conventional forms of preaching" which the early Church borrowed from Judaism, includes "Summaries of the history of God's People (Ueberblicke ueber die Geschichte des Gottesvolkes) which point out the divine theology of that history . . .," Rudolf K. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 96; original from Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1965), p. 98.

<sup>32</sup> By exhortation is meant the use of second or third person imperatives (or hortatory subjunctive) to urge upon the reader (or characters within the narrative) a certain action or state of mind.

<sup>33</sup> Bultmann, Theology, I, 96.



B. Jewish elements in Heb. 11:1-12:2

Heb. 11:1-12:2 appears to be a historical summary which includes all three elements (exhortation, example-series and catch-word). For purposes of comparison, canonical and extra-canonical examples of historical summary will be presented and their similarity to the Hebrews passage briefly noted.

Canonical examples of historical summary, with exhortation only

(1) Deuteronomy 1-4. In this extensive passage Moses reviews the young history of the people Israel. Following a brief introduction (1:1-5), events are reviewed from Mt. Sinai (1:6-8): the selection of the 70 elders (1:9-18), Kadesh-barnea (1:19-46), Mt. Seir (2:1-8), Moab (2:9-16), Ammon (2:17-23), King Sihon (2:24-37), King Og (3:1-7), the division of the land in Transjordan (3:8-20), the exhortation to Joshua (3:21-22, 29) and Moses' view of the land from Mt. Pisgah (3:23-28). In all this, the emphasis is on the Lord's leading of the people and His determination to bring them into the land.

Moses moves from this historical summary to exhortation with the words, "And now, Israel, hear . . ." (  $\nu\nu\psi\ \lambda\chi\tau\psi\ \eta\tau\eta\upsilon\iota$  /  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \nu\theta\nu\ \text{Ἰσραὴλ}\ \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\epsilon$  , 4:1). God's covenant people are to observe the stipulations of His covenant so that they may possess the land and demonstrate the Lord's holy character to the surrounding nations (4:1-8). Doubtless this historical summary reflects the prologue of Near Eastern treaties recounting past relationship of suzerain

and vassal and requiring submission of the vassal to certain stipulations. By framing such declarations in a theological context, however, a sense of salvation-history was impressed on the hearts and minds of God's people. This attitude influenced Jewish writers into the New Testament era.

(2) Psalm 78 (77 LXX). This psalm begins with exhortation. Asaph, in the first verse, by means of synonymous parallelism, calls upon the people to "listen!" (אָזְנֵי / προσέχετε), that is, "incline your ear!" (אָזְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל / κλίνατε τὸ οὖς ὑμῶν). This exhortation is liturgical (or "rhetorical," to speak anachronistically), but the moral intent of the psalm is reflected in verse 8: "that they may not become like their fathers" (אַל יִשְׁכַּחֲמוּ / ἵνα μὴ γένωνται ὡς οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν).

The first seven verses are the call to heed the words of the psalmist, and are followed by a statement of the general purpose of the psalm (8-11). Then Asaph begins the historical review: the wonders in the land of Egypt (12); the crossing of the Sea (13) and leading by the cloud (14); water given from the Rock (15-16); food sent from heaven (17-31); the rebellion of the people (32-41); the plagues on Egypt (42-51); leading the people through the Desert and drowning their enemies in the Sea (52-53); driving the Goyim out of Canaan (54-55); the unfaithfulness and idolatry of the people (56-58); the capture of the Covenant Box and punishment of Israel (59-67); the choice of Judah for the Sacred Tent and David for the King (68-72).

We should note particularly that since this psalm puts the exhortation before the historical summary, it does not follow the summary with an inferential particle. This psalm differs from Deuteronomy 1-4 in one other respect: the historical review is not strictly chronological, as the mention of Egypt (12, 52) and the Sea (13, 53) twice each indicates.

(3) Psalm 106 (105 LXX). This anonymous psalm is most probably from the exilic era. As with Psalm 78, its exhortations are liturgical: "Hallelujah! Acknowledge the LORD . . ." (אֲדַבֵּר / ἐξομολογήσθε, verse 1); "Let all the people say, 'Amen!'" (וְכָל הָעָם יֹאמַר אָמֵן / καὶ ἐρεῖ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς γένοιτο γένοιτο, verse 48). However, it too has a moral thrust, as indicated in the blessing in verse 3 on those who "keep justice, perform righteousness" (שָׁמְרוּ אֶת הַדִּינִים וְעָשׂוּ צְדָקָה / ποιῶντες δικαιοσύνην φυλάσσοντες κρίσιν).

The psalmist starts with the people in Egypt and emphasizes the Lord's grace in delivering them despite their unbelief (7-13), particularly stressing the wonders at the Sea (see 7-11). The next lengthy section deals with the experience in the Desert (14-34), including the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (16-18), the Molten Calf incident (19-20), and the incidents at Kadesh (24) and Baal-peor (28). He next describes the conquest of Canaan (35-39), or rather Canaan's conquest of Israel, as they turn to the idolatrous practices of the Goyim. This in turn leads to Israel's captivity among the nations (40-46), from which the psalmist prays for salvation (47).

Again, the lack of an inferential particle leading into the exhortation should be noted.

(4) Psalm 135 (134 LXX). In this anonymous psalm, possibly also exilic, liturgical exhortation abounds at both beginning and end: "Praise the LORD!" (יְהוָה לְהַלְלוּ , verses 1, 3; Αλληλουια , verse 1; ἀνεύετε τὸν κύριον , verse 3); "Praise . . . !" (יְהוָה / ἀνεύετε , twice in verse 1); "Bless . . . !" (יְהוָה / εὐλογήσατε , four times in verses 19-20); "Hallelujah!" (21 MT; 135:1 LXX).

The elements of historical summary in this psalm are restricted to verses 8-12, with the plagues in Egypt (8-9) and the defeat of Sihon and Og (10-12). Both of these incidents were seen previously in Psalm 78 and Deuteronomy 1-4. Again, no inferential particle introduces the exhortation here.

(5) Psalm 136 (135 LXX). Another anonymous praise psalm whose historical elements serve the overarching theme of praise to the Lord. It both begins and ends with the call to "Acknowledge . . . !" (יְהוָה / ἐξομολογήσθε , verses 1-3, 26).

The historical summary here begins with Creation (5-9), then moves on to the familiar themes of Egypt, Pharaoh and the Sea (10-15), the Desert (16), and Sihon and Og (17-22). No inferential particle is to be found.

(6) Ezekiel 20. This is a historical summary from an exilic prophet. The exhortation is indirect, addressed within the historical narrative to the former generations of Israel, but with clear application to Ezekiel's contemporaries: "cast away (abominations)

!" (יְצַדִּיק / ἀπορηψάτω , verse 7); "walk, keep, do (the Lord's commands)!" (יָשׁוּב וְיִרְמָז וְיִצַּדִּיק / πορεύεσθε φυλάσασθε ποιεῖτε , verse 19; compare verses 18, 20).

In reviewing the history of Israel, Ezekiel stresses the rebellion of the people in turning to idols: in Egypt (5-9), the Desert (10-26) and Canaan (27-32). He concludes that the Lord must finally purge His people of idolatry in the Exile (33-39).

The "therefore" at verses 27, 30 (יְצַדִּיק / διατοῦτο ) could be thought of as an inferential particle; however, it is used in commands from the Lord to Ezekiel.

(7) Acts 13:16-40. A Lucan passage recording a speech of Paul in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch.<sup>34</sup> This is a true historical summary, but with only three names of historical figures given (Samuel, verse 20; Saul, verse 21; David, verse 22).

Exhortation here is both rhetorical and moral: rhetorical at beginning ("Hear!" ἀκούσατε , verse 16) and end ("Therefore let it be known to you" γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν , verse 38); moral in the conclusion ("Therefore watch out" βλέπετε οὖν , verse 40).

In Paul's historical summary, he briefly traces God's choice of Israel, His power in guiding them, and especially His choice of David as the one through whom the Savior would come (17-22). Remarkably, Paul devotes most of this sermon to John the Baptist and Jesus, implying that the aim of Israel's prior history is realized

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<sup>34</sup> This is the passage in which  
to describe Paul's sermon; cf. Heb. 13:22.

is used

in the recent events in Palestine (23-37).

It is worth noting that Luke records Paul as twice using an inferential particle in his concluding exhortations ( $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ , verses 38, 40).

Canonical examples of historical summary, with example-series only

(1) 2 Peter 2. In discussing the imminent appearance of false teachers among his readers (1-3), Peter reviews God's past dealings with His righteous ones and with sinners (4-8) in order to show that He will not overlook the evil when it does come (9-11). Peter's primary examples are: the angels who sinned (4); Noah and the world of his time (5); Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah (6-8); and, further down, Balaam (15-16). Peter's emphasis on example is apparent from his use of the term  $\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$  in verse 6.

(2) Jude 3-18. This passage is parallel to 2 Peter 2. Here the false teachers have already come (3-4). Jude, like Peter, reviews God's salvation and judgment, beginning with Egypt (5). He follows Peter in mentioning the sinning angels (6) and Sodom and Gomorrah (7; he does not mention Lot). In addition, he uses Michael the archangel as a contrast to the blasphemy of the false teachers (9-10). Like Peter, he mentions Balaam, but adds Cain and Korah in the same context (11). Jude, like Peter, uses the word example in connection with Sodom and Gomorrah (7--Jude's word is  $\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$ ).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> This passage could be grouped with the following category, "exhortation and example-series," since Jude appeals to his

Canonical examples of historical summary, with exhortation and example-series

(1) Nehemiah 9:5-31. This prayer may be that of Ezra (LXX, καὶ εἶπεν Ἐσδρας , verse 6), though it is without ascription in the Masoretic Text. It is preceded by an exhortation to the people: "Stand up, bless the LORD!" (קוּמִי בְרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה / ἀνάστητε εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον, .verse 5). It ends with an appeal to God which, while it cannot be classified as exhortation, is introduced by the phrase "And now . . ." (וְעַתָּה / καὶ νῦν , verse 32).

The historical summary in the prayer is familiar from Deuteronomy 1-4 and Psalm 78. It begins with an appeal to God as the Creator (6), followed by a review of history from Abraham (7-8); the Sea (9-11); Mt. Sinai (12-14); manna from heaven and water from the Rock (15); the molten calf (18); the Desert experience (19-21); Sihon and Og (22); the possession of Canaan (23-25) and constant rebellion against God's prophets (26-31). The familiar theme of God's forgiveness despite the people's rebellion is prominent here.

(2) Psalm 105 (104 LXX). This anonymous psalm is filled with exhortation, and stresses the Lord's mighty work in the life of His people through individuals. No less than nine exhortations open the psalm: "Confess!" (הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ / ἐξομολογεσθε , verse 1); "Make known!" (הַגִּידוּ / ἀπαγγείλατε , verse 1); "Sing!" (הִשְׁמְעוּ / ἴσατε , verse 2); "Make music!" (הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ / ψάλατε , verse 2);

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readers to "remember" (μνήσθητε , v. 17, introduced by δέ ) the Apostles' words. It has been put here because of its striking similarity to 2 Peter 2.

"Tell!" (ἰπ'ὶ | διηγήσαθε , verse 2); "Praise!" (ἰλλῆλη | ἐπαινεῖσθε , verse 3); "Seek!" (ἰωρῆ | ἰωττ | ἵητήσατε , verse 4); "Remember!" (ἰτῶτ | μνήσθητε , verse 5).

The psalmist then traces the Lord's gracious dealing with Abraham (8-9; compare verse 42), Isaac (9) and Jacob (10-15); through Joseph (16-23); Moses and Aaron (26-42; the Plagues, 28-35; the Desert, 37-42); the Conquest (43-44).

Although the initial exhortations are liturgical, the moral intention of the psalm is indicated by the purpose clause in verse 45, introduced by ἵνα / ὅπως .

(3) Acts 7:2-53. This sermon by Stephen is designed to demonstrate that unbelieving Israelites throughout their history have rejected God's spokesmen. It begins with a rhetorical exhortation: "Hear!" (ἀκούσατε , verse 2). Stephen then reviews the history of God's people, from Abraham (2-8), Isaac and Jacob and the twelve Patriarchs (8) to Joseph (9-16), Moses and Aaron (17-44), Joshua (45), David (45-46) and finally, Solomon (47-50).

Stephen's conclusion in verses 51-53 is not an exhortation in the strict sense, since it contains no imperative or hortatory subjunctives. Rather it is an accusation, as the use of the second person plural shows: "you . . . are resisting" (ὕμεῖς . . . ἀντιπύετε , verse 51); "you . . . have become" (ὕμεῖς . . . ἐγένεσθε , verse 52); "you received . . . you have not kept" (ἐλάβετε . . . οὐκ ἐφυλάξατε , verse 53). In addition, there are no inferential particles here.



### Catchword

While no canonical examples of historical summary with a catchword have been found (apart from Hebrews 11), 1 Corinthians 13 exemplifies the use of a catchword in general. Paul's theme, and therefore his catchword, is "love" (ἀγάπη). The word is used nine times in the thirteen verses. Three times the Apostle repeats the phrase "if I do not have love" (ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, verses 1, 2, 3). The artful use of a catchword here shows why such an approach would readily be adopted by Hebrews for his argument.

### Extra-canonical examples of historical summary, with exhortation only

(1) Judith 5:5-21. In this passage an appeal is made by Achior the Ammonite to King Holofernes. He begs the king to spare the returned Jews in Judea and Jerusalem. His appeal begins and ends with an exhortation to the king: "Let it then be heard" (ἀκουάτω δὴ, verse 5); "Let my lord then pass by" (παρελθέτω δὴ, verse 21).

Achior's appeal includes a summary of Israel's history: they began in Chaldaea, moved to Mesopotamia, and finally to Canaan (6-9); removed to Egypt because of famine (10); they were oppressed in Egypt, but eventually liberated (10-12); they crossed the Red Sea and wandered in the Desert (13-15a); crossed the Jordan and settled in Canaan (15b-16). There they disobeyed God and were taken into Exile (17-18). However, they have returned to their god and are restored to their land (19).

It should be noted that Achior's final exhortation begins with the phrase (verse 20).

(2) 3 Maccabees 2:2-20. This is a prayer of the high priest Simon in which he calls upon the Lord to judge the wicked Gentile ruler and deliver His people. Appeals appear at beginning and end of the prayer: "Pay attention!" (πρόσχεσ , verse 2); "Do not punish (μὴ ἐκδικήσης ) . . . nor chastise (μηδὲ εὐθύνης )!" (verse 17); "Blot out (ἀπάλειψον ) . . . do away with (διασκέδασον ) . . . make known (ἐπίφανον )!" (verse 19); "May they go before (προκαταλαβέτωσαν ) . . . give (δός )!" (verse 20).

The prayer reviews the judgment of the wicked: the Flood (4); Sodom (5); Pharaoh (6-8). Simon speaks of the Lord's choice of Jerusalem and the temple.

There are no inferential particles in this example.

Extra-canonical examples of historical summary, with example-series only

(1) 4 Ezra 7:106-110. This work is apocalyptic, concerned with issues of the eschaton. In the immediate context, the concern of the writer is to question why there can be no intercession in the Day of Judgment. To buttress the point, he cites historical examples of intercession: Abraham and Moses (106); Joshua (107); Samuel, David and Solomon (108); Elijah (109); Hezekiah (110). Nonetheless, he is informed that in the eschaton destiny is finally sealed. The introduction and conclusion are formulaic:



with a prayer that God might answer. This prayer is based on the fact that God answered the pious in the past: Abraham, the fathers at the Sea, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Jonah, David and Solomon (the last two included together). It might be noted that David and Solomon are taken out of chronological order and placed at the end.<sup>38</sup>

Extra-canonical examples of historical summary, with exhortation and example-series

(1) 1 Maccabees 2:50-68. In this stirring passage, Mattathias arouses his sons to defend the people of the Law against the impious Gentiles. Appeals both at beginning and end call them to action: "Be zealous!" (ζηλώσατε, verse 50); "Remember!" (μνήσθητε, verse 51); "Consider!" (έννοήθητε, verse 61); "Do not fear!" (μη φοβηθητε, verse 62); "Act like men . . . be strong!" (ανδρείεσθε . . . ισχύσατε, verse 64); "Hear!" (ἀκούετε, verse 65); "Gather!" (προσάξτε, verse 67); "Repay!" (ανταπόδοτε, verse 68).

Mattathias reviews the history of God's stalwarts as examples of faithfulness: Abraham (52), Joseph (53), Phineas (54), Joshua (55), Caleb (56), David (57), Elijah (58), Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael (59), and Daniel (60).

There are several examples of inferentials particles here:

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<sup>38</sup> Herbert Danby, ed., The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 196; for the Hebrew, see Philip Blackman, ed., Mishnayoth (New York: The Judaica Press, 1963), II, 417-18.

καὶ νῦν (50); καὶ οὕτως (61); καὶ ὑμεῖς (64, 67); καὶ ἰδοὺ (65).

(2) 4 Maccabees 16:16-22. In his eulogy of the mother of the seven Jewish martyrs, 4 Maccabees includes her parting words to her sons. Like Mattathias in 1 Maccabees 2, she urges upon them a steadfast faith: "Struggle!" (ἐναγωνίασθε, verse 16); "Remember!" (ἀναμνήσθητε, verse 18); "Don't be vexed!" (μη χαλεπαίνετε, verse 22).

Her examples are not nearly as extensive as Mattathias'; Abraham (20), Daniel (20), Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael (21). Her initial and final appeals include clear hortatory formulae: "Oh, children" (ὦ παῖδες, verse 16); "Therefore you also" (καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν, verse 22).

(3) Sirach 44-50.<sup>39</sup> The most extensive historical summary in the literature here examined is this "Hymn of the Fathers" (ΠΑΤΕΡΩΝΥΜΝΟΣ/Σῆν Πῆκ Πῆσ). At beginning and end is a call for praise: of the Fathers (αἰνέσωμεν/ἡῖῖῖα, 44:1) and of God (εὐλογήσατε/יְהוָה, 50:22).

Between these two appeals for praise is an almost completely chronological account of the great deeds of Israel's ancients; Enoch (44:16; repeated 49:14); Noah (44:17-18); Abraham (44:19-21); Isaac (44:22), Jacob and the Twelve Patriarchs (44:23); Moses (45:1-5); Aaron (45:6-22); Phinehas (45:23-26); Joshua (46:1-8);

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<sup>39</sup> A full-scale comparison between this passage and Heb. 11:1-12:2 will be made below, in dealing with encomium.

Judges (46:11-12); Samuel (46:13-20); Nathan (47:1); David (47:2-11); Solomon (47:12-22); Jeroboam/Rehoboam (47:23-25); Elijah (48:1-11); Elisha (48:12-16); Hezekiah/Isaiah (48:17-25); Josiah/Jeremiah (49:1-9); The Twelve Prophets (49:10); Zerubbabel (49:11); Joshua the High Priest (49:12); Nehemiah (49:13); Joseph, Shem, Seth, Adam (49:14-16; Enoch recurs here); Simonben-Onias (50:1-21).

Particles used here in connection with the opening and closing exhortations:  $\delta\eta/\chi\tau$  (44:1),  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \nu\upsilon\nu/\ \iota\tau\tau\upsilon$  (50:22).

(4) 1 Clement 9-12. In urging the Corinthians to heal the divisions in their church, Clement of Rome appeals to historical examples. This passage begins and ends with exhortation: "Let us obey! ( $\upsilon\pi\alpha\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us fall down! ( $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us turn! ( $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\psi\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ )" (9:1); "Let us fix our gaze! ( $\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ , 9:2); "Let us be humble-minded! ( $\tau\alpha\pi\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\phi\rho\omicron\nu\eta\acute{\sigma}\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us do! ( $\pi\omicron\iota\eta\acute{\sigma}\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$  )" (13:1).

Clement's examples are: Enoch (9:3), Noah (9:4), Abraham (chapter 10), Lot (chapter 11), Rahab (chapter 12), and Joshua (12:2). He uses inferential particles at 9:1 ( $\delta\iota\omicron$ ) and 13:1 ( $\omicron\upsilon\nu$ ).

(5) 1 Clement 17-18. Here again Clement urges humility and employs historical examples. His exhortations are many: "Let us be imitators!" ( $\mu\iota\mu\eta\tau\alpha\iota\ \gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$ , 17:1); "Let us hasten on! ( $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\text{-}\alpha\nu\alpha\delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us fix our gaze! ( $\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us cleave! ( $\kappa\omicron\lambda\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$  ", 19:2); "Let us contemplate! ( $\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us gaze! ( $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\psi\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) . . . let us consider! ( $\nu\omicron\eta\acute{\sigma}\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$  )." (19:3)

Clement's examples: Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel (17:1); Abraham (17:2); Job (17:3-4); Moses (17:5-6); David (chapter 18). Obviously Clement does not follow chronological order. The transition from examples to exhortation is indicated by the particle οὖν in 19:1, 2.

An extra-canonical example of historical summary, with catchword only

Wisdom 10. In extolling Wisdom, the writer shows her role in the history of God's people. The catchword is σοφία (8, 9, 21; compare verse 4), which is also referred to with the pronoun αὐτή (1, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15; compare verse 3, ἀπ' αὐτῆς). The review of history refers to individuals, but does not name them: Adam (1-2), Cain (3), Noah (4), Abraham (5), Lot (6-8), Jacob (10-12), Joseph (13-14), Moses (15-21).

Extra-canonical examples of historical summary, with exhortation, example-series, and catchword

(1) Zadokite Document (CD) 2-3. In appealing to men to heed the way God acts and adjust their lives accordingly, the writer employs the Biblical theme of "stubbornness of heart" (see Ps. 81: 13 MT:  $\text{דָּבַרְתֶּם לֹא-יִשְׁמָעוּ אֶת-קוֹלֵי יְהוָה} \quad \text{}$ ). This becomes his catchword (2: 17-18; 3:5, 11-12), which is referred to several times by a pronominal suffix with the preposition  $\text{עַל}$  ( $\text{עַל-הַדָּבָר} : 2:18; 3:1, 2; \text{עַל-הַדָּבָר} : 3:4; \text{עַל-הַדָּבָר} : 3:9, 10$ ). He begins the passage (2:14-3:12) with an exhortation: "Listen to me!" ( $\text{שָׁמְעוּ-לִי} \quad \text{}$ , 2:14).

The writer reviews the sad history of the stubborn of heart, contrasted with those who did not walk in that way: the Watchers

of Heaven (2:18), Giants (2:19), "All flesh" (2:20-21), Noah's sons (3:1), Abraham (3:2), Isaac and Jacob (3:3), Jacob's sons (3:4), Israel in Egypt and the Desert (3:5-6), at Kadesh (3:7-8), sons, kings and heroes (3:9), and all sinners against the Covenant (3:10-12).

CD introduces his exhortation with the particle  $\text{ὅτι}$  (2:14).<sup>40</sup>

(2) 1 Clement 4-6. As in a later passage (9-12) dealt with above, Clement attempts to heal the divisions within the Corinthian church. He focuses on jealousy, therefore his catchword is  $\text{ζήλος}$ , in combination with the synonyms  $\text{φθόνος}$  and  $\text{ἔρις}$  (4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; 5:2, 4, 5; 6:1, 2, 3, 4). The section both opens and closes with exhortation: "You see" ( $\text{ὁρᾶτε}$ , 4:7); "Let us put aside ( $\text{ἀπολίπωμεν}$ ) . . . let us go ( $\text{ἔλθωμεν}$ )" (7:2); "Let us see" ( $\text{ἴδωμεν}$ , 7:3); "Let us fix our gaze" ( $\text{ἀτενίσωμεν}$ , 7:4).

Clement gives a series of examples, both positive and negative, from history: Cain and Abel (4:1-7), Jacob and Esau (4:8), Joseph (4:9), Moses and Pharaoh (4:10), Aaron and Miriam (4:11), Dathan and Abiram (4:12), David and Saul (4:13), Peter (5:4), and Paul (5:5-7).

The final exhortation is introduced by the particle  $\text{ὅτι}$  (7:2).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Zadokite Document" is Gaster's designation for CD; Theodor H. Gaster, ed., The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976).

<sup>41</sup> On the similarities between 1 Clement and Hebrews see E. J.



These last two passages (CD 2-3; 1 Clement 4-6) are the closest parallels to Hebrews 11, both being historical summaries and both including example-series, exhortation (Heb. 12:1: "let us run," *τρέχωμεν*) and catchword (Hebrews 11 = "faith," *πίστις*). It should also be noted that the exhortation in 12:1 is introduced after the historical summary by an inferential particle (*τοιαυτοῦν*, compare Deuteronomy 1-4; Acts 13; Judith 5; 4 Maccabees 16; Sirach 44-50; 1 Clement 4-6; 9-12; 17-18).

Despite the parallels to these passages, their elements do not exhaust the literary analysis of Hebrews 11. In the passage Heb. 11:1-12:2, the author employs an encomiastic use of historical summary. It remains then to define the term encomium, and examine how Hebrews 11 uses encomiastic method.

### C. The Graeco-Roman element in Heb. 11:1-12:2--encomium

Leland Ryken gives the following definition of encomium;

An encomium is a work of literature written in praise of someone or something. Although it can be a work in praise of a particular person, it is preferable to define the genre more precisely as a work that praises a generalized character type or an abstract quality.<sup>42</sup>

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Goodspeed, "First Clement called forth by Hebrews," Journal of Biblical Literature 30 (1911), 157-60 and Donald Alfred Hagner, The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 179-95.

<sup>42</sup> Leland Ryken, The Literature of the Bible (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1974), p. 201.

Ryken goes on to list standard methods for the encomiast:

The conventional formulae used in an encomium include an introduction to the topic (the "exordium," in classical rhetoric), praise "by what kind he came of" (emphasis on the distinguished and ancient ancestry of the subject), praise by the acts and/or attributes of the subject, praise by declaring the indispensable or superior nature of the subject, and a conclusion urging the reader to emulate.<sup>43</sup>

Ryken points out how Heb. 11:1-12:2 uses these formulae:

verse 2--ancestry ("men of old"); verse 4--emulation (also 12:1-2);  
verse 6--indispensability; verses 16, 26, 35--superiority; verse  
32--inexpressibility (deeds of faith too numerous to mention).<sup>44</sup>

Of course he notes the repetition of "by faith" and does not fail to comment on the example-series:

The structural principle underlying the list is historical chronology. . . . This means that the chief literary device used in the encomium is allusion, with the writer managing to evoke all kinds of positive responses to his subject (faith) by linking it to the high points of the national history of his Hebrew audience.<sup>45</sup>

Ryken's thesis that Hebrews 11 is an encomium on faith has some merit. The validity of this thesis will be examined below and the encomiastic elements in the passage will be considered.

A thorough examination of the encomium may be found in the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-212.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

work of T. R. Lee.<sup>46</sup> Lee presents an historical sketch of the encomium form which begins in the fifth century B.C. with Pindar and progresses through Isocrates, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle (fourth century B.C.), Demetrius (third century/first century B.C. ?), Theon (first/second century A.D.), Hermogenes (second century A.D.) and Menander (third century A.D.).

Each of the latter three rhetoricians presents a brief definition, all of which agree substantially with that of Ryken above:

An encomium is a speech which elucidates the magnitude of deeds according to virtue. . . . (Theon)

An encomium is a setting forth of the good qualities which belong to someone publicly or privately. . . . (Hermogenes)

The royal speech is an encomium of a king. Accordingly it embraces an agreed upon amplification of the good qualities belonging to a king. . . . (Menander)<sup>47</sup>

It should be noted that these definitions differ from Ryken only in that they do not allow for an encomium on an abstract quality. Nonetheless, abstract qualities were occasionally the subjects of encomia. Lee summarizes the results of his historical summary:

In the course of the foregoing survey the features of

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Robert Lee, Studies in the Form of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 44-50 (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union and University of California, 1979), Part 2, passim.

<sup>47</sup> Translation and original in Lee, pp. 121-22; see his notes 60, 62, 63.

the encomium which have been repeatedly in evidence and which appear to be the basic marks of the *ἐῖδος* are: (1) the use of amplification (*ἀΰξησις*), and (2) a distinct arrangement (*τάξις*) or outline that has remained relatively standard throughout the periods discussed.<sup>48</sup>

Lee gives several methods by which amplification was accomplished, among them comparison (syncretism, including contrast), inadequacy of the encomiast, actions which were unique or unprecedented, and actions that produced good or desirable results.<sup>49</sup> A quotation from Isocrates shows how comparison and the expression of inadequacy were used:

If we were to compare (*παραβάλλομεν*) the deeds of Evagoras with those of each one, such an account would perhaps be inappropriate to the occasion, and the time would not suffice for the telling. But, if we select the most illustrious of these rulers and examine their exploits in the light of his, our investigation will lose nothing thereby and our discussion will be much more brief.<sup>50</sup>

The standard outline to which Lee refers contains four parts, which were also described by Ryken: (1) the prooemium (*προοίμιον*), which may include a summary of the argument, an expression of inadequacy, of the obligation to praise great men, and an appeal to the audience to join in praise; (2) the *γένος* (genealogy), including both positive and negative comparisons, and a list of ancestors, both immediate and remote; (3) the *πράξεις* (acts),

<sup>48</sup> Lee, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 212-19.

<sup>50</sup> Isocrates, Evagoras 33-34; Lee's emphasis, p. 124.

including various methods of amplification; (4) the epilogue (ἐπίλογος), including a recapitulation and an appeal to praise or emulation.<sup>51</sup>

The author of Rhetorica ad Alexandrum gives instructions on how to use the genealogy:

The proper way to employ genealogy is this. If the ancestors are men of merit, you must enumerate (αναλαμβάνοντα) them all from the beginning down to the person you are eulogizing (εγκωμιαζόμενον), and at each of the ancestors summarily mention something to his credit (ἐνδοξόν τι παρατιθέναι).<sup>52</sup>

This pointed study of encomium as a form in classical rhetoric is but one of several points at which Lee's research serves as a basis for this investigation. His major purpose is to define the form of Sirach 44-50. In so doing, he comments on some of the same historical summaries that have been reviewed above. Since Lee believes that the form of Sirach 44-50 is that of an encomium, and that encomia are designed to praise men, not God, he rejects the canonical material as parallel to his passage:

. . . we concluded that the pericopes from the Hebrew canon which have been likened to Sir. 44-50 are either hymns of praise of Yahweh for his acts or that they are deuteronomistic recitations of Israel's history where the focus is on the obedience/disobedience of the nation

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<sup>51</sup> Lee, p. 224; cf. pp. 229-43.

<sup>52</sup> Rhetorica ad Alexandrum 35.1440b 30; Lee, pp. 125-26.

as a whole. In neither case do they offer a parallel to Sirach's Praise of the Fathers.<sup>53</sup>

In terms of the extra-canonical material, however, Lee does see a connection:

There was, however, one form that emerged from our discussion that commended itself as the model employed by Jesus Sirach: that of the Beispielreihe or series of examples. We noted that most of the intertestamental pericopes which commentators have seen as similar to Sir. 44-50 were of this form . . . and although these post-date Sirach, the form had already been in use in the Greek world prior to Sirach's time.<sup>54</sup>

Even though Hebrews 11 and Sirach 44-50 are both examples of Beispielreihen, Lee sees a formal distinction between the two passages which serves to classify some other passages here examined:

I would suggest that the exempla of CD 2-3 and Wisd. 10 are of the same form as that of Heb. 11 in the New Testament where the Stichwort is "by faith" (πίστεως). . . . Moreover, since they are fashioned around the use of catch-words, they are distinct from the Beispielreihen of Sir. 44-50, I Macc. 2, III Macc. 2 and 6, and IV Macc. 16 and 18.<sup>55</sup>

It is the opinion of the present writer that Hebrews 11 and Sirach 44-50 are much more alike formally than Lee is willing to admit. That both are encomia will be demonstrated below. Here the two passages will be compared in terms of: (1) the formal elements

<sup>53</sup> Lee, pp. 315-16.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

of exhortation and example-series; (2) purpose; (3) view of history.

To begin with the hortatory language of the two passages, a certain difference is evident. The exhortations which begin and end Sirach 44-50 are liturgical/rhetorical: "Let us praise!" (αἰνεσωμεν / אִשְׁבְּחֵם , 44:1); "Bless!" (εὐλογήσατε / בָּרַכּוּ , 50:22). The appeal in Hebrews, while figurative, is rather a moral exhortation: "Let us run!" (τρέχωμεν , 12:1). Both passages use particles to introduce the exhortation. Sirach: δη/χι (44:1), και νῦν / אַתָּה (50:22). Hebrews: τοιγαροῦν (12:1).

An obvious mark which sets off the use of example-series in Sirach 44-50 is its extent. For instance, there are no less than sixteen names in Sirach 44-50 which do not occur in Hebrews 11. When this is set against the fact that Sirach and Hebrews share twelve names, the length of the example-series in Sirach 44-50 becomes more apparent.

Since inclusion and omission are relevant to determining the purpose of a passage (as well as being encomiastic conventions), purpose will now be examined. In determining the purpose of each author the following elements will be considered: (1) direct statements of each; (2) major themes of the two books; (3) reasons for omission of certain figures.

Ben-Sira devotes the first fifteen verses of chapter 44 to what amounts to a prologue to his hymn. The superscription "Hymn of the Fathers" was referred to above. In the first two verses he

stresses that it is through these Fathers that the Lord revealed Himself. Some were conquerors and wise men (verses 3-4), some were poets and composers, rich and powerful men (verses 5-6). It was because of their good deeds that the Fathers were remembered while others were forgotten (verses 8-10). They bequeathed the covenants to their children (verses 11-12). Their seed/memory (σπέρμα/סרס) endures forever; their glory/righteousness (δόξα/דוקד) will not be forgotten; their bodies are buried in peace, but their names live on (verses 13-14). Nations will recount their wisdom, and their praise will be announced in the assembly.

At the end of his hymn (50:22-24), Ben-Sira gives a blessing which serves as an effective epilogue. He first calls upon the reader to bless the God of All/the LORD God of Israel (θεῶ πάντων ἰατ' ἡλ' ) who does wonders and cares for man from his birth (verse 22). He prays that the Lord may grant a cheerful and wise heart and peace (verse 23). He concludes with a prayer for the Lord to confirm His mercy with us/Simon and redeem us in our days/establish the covenant of Phinehas (סנהס סרס) which will not be cut off for him or his seed forever (verse 24). This last difference is not only a little confusing, but also quite crucial in the comparison with Hebrews. John Snaith explains:

The Hebrew text of this section forms a prayer specifically for Simon and his successors in the Aaronic high priesthood. Two additional lines existed originally at the beginning of verse 24: 'may his (God's) mercy be confirmed to Simon, and may he establish with him Phinehas' covenant.' . . . The Greek translator omitted these



lines, as the direct Aaronic line had been broken by the time of his translation, and turned the verses into a general prayer for the peace and prosperity of Israel as a whole, following a recital of God's previous acts for them.<sup>56</sup>

While the breaking of the Aaronic line of the priesthood is somewhat embarrassing for Ben-Sira's grandson, Hebrews argues that in fact the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood was only a temporary institution in the first place, a shadow of the better High Priesthood of Jesus Christ (5:1-10; chapter 7, passim).

The purpose then of this hymn is to show God's revelation of Himself through these heroes, the glory of their good deeds during their lives, the importance of the covenants made with them, and the need for the continuation of the Aaronic priesthood as essential to the covenant. In addition, an aspect of these heroes is stressed which continues to be a major theme in Judaism down to this day: the blessing of their memory.

The statements in Hebrews 11 regarding the purpose of the passage may be found in three places: (1) verses 1-3 form a kind of prologue, (2) verses 39-40 summarize the chapter as a kind of epilogue and (3) verses 13-16 interrupt the historical survey with a brief commentary.

The first verse immediately calls attention to what is the obvious focus of the chapter: "faith" (πίστις). Hebrews says

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<sup>56</sup> John G. Snaith, Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 253.

that faith is the "basis" (ὑπόστασις) of what is hoped for. Along with the succeeding "proof of what cannot be seen," this term should be taken to imply a guarantee of hope.<sup>57</sup>

The writer begins what is to become an unstinting emphasis on faith in verse two by use of the phrase ἐν ταύτῃ, referring back to the πίστις of verse one. By this faith the elders (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) were witnessed to (by God). Verse three ties together the theme of faith with the Word of God: "The word of God, moreover, that vital and dynamic force by which the world was created . . . is the reality whose promises evinced the faith and established the hope of the Old Testament believers."<sup>58</sup>

In the epilogue to this chapter, the fact is repeated that it was through this faith that the elders received divine approval. Nonetheless, they did not receive the promise (verse 39). This was because God foresaw something better for us, that they should not be brought to completion apart from us (verse 40). This epilogue thus brings up a theme which characterizes the thrust of Hebrews as a whole:

The 'better plan' which God had made embraces the better hope, the better promises, the better covenant, the better sacrifices, the better and abiding possession, and

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hughes, Hebrews, p. 440. See exegesis in ch. 2 of this paper.

<sup>58</sup> Hughes, Hebrews, p. 442; emphasis his.

the better resurrection which is their heritage, and ours.<sup>59</sup>

The mesologue (verses 13-16) depicts the heroes of the Old Covenant as strangers and pilgrims, not only in the Promised Land, but on the earth itself (verse 13). This was because they were seeking a heavenly city (verse 16; compare verse 10). As the epilogue repeats, they died without receiving the promises.

Hebrews makes use of the Old Testament heroes to show that God's approval rests on those who conduct themselves as strangers in this world because of their trust in the divine promise of a heavenly hope of perfection. This hope is nothing short of salvation for the soul (10:39), and this faith should produce a willingness to lay aside all the sinful encumbrances which hinder the Christian race (12:1).

F. F. Bruce sums up the basic contrast manifested by the way the two authors use Israel's heroes:

Ben Sira celebrates at length all the commendable qualities of the men of God whom he commemorates; our author, more concisely, confines himself to those features of his heroes' careers which illustrate their faith in God, for the encouragement of those who come after them.<sup>60</sup>

Fitting the purpose of Hebrews 11 into the overall message of

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<sup>59</sup> Bruce, Hebrews, p. 344; cf. Heb. 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:35.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

the book, emphasis is given to the superiority of Christ's New Covenant to the Old in all aspects, including his High Priesthood which far surpasses that of Aaron. Specifically, the institutions of the Old Covenant (the Sacred Tent, the offerings, and so forth) and the history of the Chosen People point forward to the time of fulfillment in Christ. This progressive emphasis is in stark contrast to the static concept of Sirach which can only encourage imitation of the good deeds of the patriarchs, with a glimmer of hope in the eternal continuance of priestly ritual (Hebrew text) or expectation of political redemption (Greek translation).

It was mentioned above that the praise of Israel's heroes by Sirach and Hebrews touches at twelve points. Specifically, these are: (1) Enoch, (2) Noah, (3) Abraham, (4) Isaac, (5) Jacob, (6) Joseph, (7) Moses, (8) Joshua, (9) the Judges, (10) Samuel, (11) David and (12) the Prophets.

A common point as far as omissions are concerned is that neither author begins with Adam, even though Sirach adds the name later. Hebrews may have omitted Adam because of his role in the fall of the race into sin. It is also appropriate to mention that despite (or perhaps because of) the popularity of the pseudepigraphical Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, neither Sirach nor Hebrews mentions any of the twelve by name except Joseph.<sup>61</sup>

Although Hebrews begins with Creation (verse 3), the first of

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<sup>61</sup> But the dating of this work is possibly later than Ben-Sira.

the elders he mentions is Abel, whom Ben-Sira omits. The reason for his inclusion in Hebrews 11 is clear--his offering is an example of faith. The nature of his offering is not the point, but is overshadowed by the writer's central concept.

Both authors have a good deal to say about Abraham; only Hebrews, however, mentions Sarah in connection with him (verses 11-12). Ben-Sira, in fact, mentions no heroine of Israel's past, although there is no shortage of them in the Old Testament (for example, Rachel, Deborah, Ruth, Esther). In addition to Sarah, Hebrews mentions Rahab (verse 31) and women who received their dead by resurrection (verse 35). The only mention of women by Ben-Sira is of the foreign women who led Solomon into idolatry (47:19). The reason for Ben-Sira's omission is likely because as a rabbi his students would be exclusively male. The most obvious reason for Hebrews' inclusion of women is because they are prominent examples of faith.<sup>62</sup>

These three names, Abel, Sarah and Rahab are the only ones mentioned in Hebrews that do not occur in Sirach. On the other hand, there are sixteen names in Sirach that do not occur in Hebrews. It is quite apparent from the multiplicity of names in Ben-Sira's hymn, along with the statement in Heb. 11:32 ("time would fail me"), that a major difference in purpose is that Sirach

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<sup>62</sup> Though Sarah's place is due primarily to her connection with Abraham.

is more comprehensive in surveying Israel's history down to the writer's time.

The emphasis on the priesthood is apparent in Ben-Sira's praise of Aaron (45:6-22), Phinehas (45:23-26), Joshua the High Priest (49:12) and Simon ben-Onias (50:1-21). In fact the priesthood seems to rank higher in the author's mind than even the venerable Moses: "Moses' high status in Judaism rests on the giving of the law and the escape from Egypt: five verses seems few for a person of such great reputation, especially when compared with Aaron (seventeen verses!)." <sup>63</sup> Not one of the above priests is mentioned in Hebrews 11, probably because of the overriding importance of the eternal High Priesthood of Jesus for the argument of the book.

Caleb is praised by Ben-Sira along with Joshua (46:7-10). It was mentioned before that both Hebrews and Sirach include Joshua. Actually, he is alluded to in Heb. 11:30, but not mentioned by name. It is not surprising, then, that Caleb is omitted. In fact, Ben-Sira connects Joshua and Caleb in the incident of the rebellion of the people at Kadesh-barnea. Hebrews regards the desert wanderings of Israel as an example of unbelief, not of faith, as is clear from his warning in chapter 3. In chapter 4, he actually mentions Joshua in a negative context (verse 8). In addition, the names Jesus and Joshua are identical in Greek (Ἰησοῦς). For these reasons

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<sup>63</sup> Snaitch, p. 220. For a fuller development of the importance of the Aaronic priesthood to Ben-Sira, see Ellis Rivkin, A Hidden Revolution (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), pp. 191-207.

Hebrews does not repeat the name in chapter 11.

Ben-Sira mentions the prophet Nathan (47:1). Snaithe sees his name as transitional: "The concept of a 'prophetic succession' starting with Moses through Joshua and Samuel stops with Nathan . . . Nathan links Samuel and David."<sup>64</sup>

Hebrews does not emphasize a concept of prophetic succession which would demand inclusion of Nathan for the above reasons, though he may be included under the rubric "Prophets" (verse 32). Sirach includes several prophets by name (Elijah, 48:1-11; Elisha, 48:12-14; Isaiah, 48:20-25; Jeremiah, 49:6b-7; Ezekiel, 49:8-9; the Twelve, 49:10). Hebrews had stated in 1:1-2 that God spoke in the past through the prophets, but now has spoken in the Son. This is probably why he does not include the prophets by name.

The exclusion of Saul and inclusion of David by both writers is expected. Ben-Sira, however, mentions a succession of kings: Solomon (47:12-22), Rehoboam and Jeroboam (47:23-25), Hezekiah (48:17-25), Josiah (49:1-9). He does not praise them all; in fact, he specifically says that David, Hezekiah and Josiah were the only good kings (49:4).

Why does Hebrews mention David, but not the other two good kings? Three reasons might be suggested: (1) time has run out (verse 32); (2) David's name may stand for other good kings; (3) Jesus is the son of David (although the author is much more concerned with him as High Priest than as King).

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<sup>64</sup> Snaithe, p. 234.

Finally, Ben-Sira praises several post-exilic figures not noted in Hebrews. Joshua the High Priest and Simon Ben-Onias have been mentioned. In addition, he names Zerubbabel (49:11) and Nehemiah (49:13), leaving out Ezra:

We need not be surprised at the omission of Ezra from Ben-Sira's list of heroes; the only post-exilic persons mentioned, apart from the high priest Simon of his own time, are those involved in restoring the buildings of Jerusalem.<sup>65</sup>

It is highly probable that Hebrews alludes to post-exilic persons in verses 32-38. To emphasize the restoration of Jerusalem, however, would be wholly against his purpose of pointing his readers to the heavenly city (11:10, 13-16; compare 13:13-14).<sup>66</sup>

To summarize the purpose of the two passages: Ben-Sira calls the roll of Israel's heroes in order to perpetuate the memory of the saints of old, to point out all their commendable qualities, and to stress the importance of the covenant, the law and the priesthood. Hebrews rather focuses on one central point--faith.

These purposes are evident both in those patriarchs whom the authors omit and those whom they include. Of those specifically mentioned by both, good deeds, law and covenant are in view in Sirach, and faith primarily in Hebrews. The word *πίστις* occurs twenty-four times in this one chapter of Hebrews. Sirach has it

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>66</sup> Another reason why Hebrews does not mention post-exilic figures by name is the constraint of time (11:32).



only twice in seven chapters (45:4; 46:15) and in each case it indicates "faithfulness, loyalty."

According to Hebrews, it was by faith that the heroes of the Old Covenant focused on the divine promise of a heavenly hope of perfection, based on the New Covenant, High-Priestly work of Jesus Christ. In this respect, while Sirach represents a development of intertestamental Judaism, Hebrews is a good example of the unique theology of the New Testament.

Some of the themes mentioned above betray the view of history of the two writers. The focus by Sirach on heroes who were involved in the building of Jerusalem shows that the earthly city is understood as central to the life of the Jewish people. To the contrary, Hebrews understands the heavenly Jerusalem as the goal of believers, and encourages his readers to leave the earthly city in order to bear Jesus' shame (13:13).

Another indication of Sirach's understanding of history is his concern for an eternal continuance of the Aaronic priesthood, based of course on the Mosaic covenant. Hebrews declares the Mosaic covenant "old," based on the revelation of the "new" covenant by Jeremiah (Hebrews 8, especially verse 13). Indeed, he connects the priesthood of Melchizedek, of which Jesus is the sole representative, with the New Covenant. The programmatic statement here is 8:6: "But now he has received a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on the basis of better promises." (Νυνὶ δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυκεν

λειτουργίας ὅσω καὶ κρείττονος ἔστω διαθήκης μεσότης ἤτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἑπαγγελίας νενομοθέτηται). This priesthood is declared to be eternal, and contrasted with the temporary priesthood of the Old Covenant (chapter 7, especially verses 3, 17, 21, 24, 28).

What ties together these contrasting ideas of heavenly versus earthly, eternal versus temporal and New versus Old is the concept (shared by other New Testament writers) that in Christ heaven has come down to earth, eternity has broken into time, and the New Age has dawned on the stage where the Old is playing itself out. The revelation in the Son has come "in these last days" (ἐπ' ἑσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων, 1:2). Christ has appeared "at the consummation of the ages" (ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, 9:26). The fact that the heroes of faith "were not brought to completion apart from us" (μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελεωθῶσιν, 11:40) is evidence that we are now living in the Age of Fulfillment.

Sirach can at best encourage his readers to look to the past, contemplating the lives of the great heroes, and to the present, giving allegiance to their high priest and praise to God for their establishment in Jerusalem. Hebrews can point his readers to the future, calling upon them to "see the unseen" (11:1, 27) by "looking to Jesus" (12:2) their great High Priest, and thereby to "run the race with endurance" (δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν . . . ἀγῶνα, 12:1).

Consideration of Sirach 44-50 will be concluded by examining

Lee's thesis that the passage is an encomium. To begin with, Lee contends that the "Hymn of the Fathers" is an innovation in Jewish literature: "in praising men, not God, Sir. 44-50 represents something new in Hebrew literature. . . ." <sup>67</sup>

This innovation involves the use of a literary form which Sirach 44-50 shares with Heb. 11:1-12:2--the example-series (Beispielreihe):

Is there a form within which Beispielreihen are utilized whose purpose it is to praise men? . . . we proposed that the answer to the above question is the encomium. As a rhetorical ἔιδος the encomium's purpose was to praise a man for his achievements and virtues. . . . <sup>68</sup>

That the example-series is used within the structure of an encomium in order to praise an individual is the basis of Lee's thesis:

Thus I suggest that Sir. 44-50 is to be understood as a composition that Sirach has consciously patterned after the types of encomia with which he could conceivably have come into contact in his day. His encomium celebrates Simon II, invites the congregation to praise the God who has given them such a faithful high priest, and holds him up as an example for his son, Onias III, to emulate. <sup>69</sup>

In dealing with the definition of the encomium form, the standard four-point outline of the form given by Lee was noted. <sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Lee, p. 315; on p. 1, Lee cites E. Jacob, H. L. Jansen and G. von Rad as recognizing the uniqueness of Sirach 44-50.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>70</sup> Above, pp. 37-38.

In order to demonstrate that Sirach 44-50 is an encomium, Lee shows how the passage fits into this standard outline:

(i) Prooemium (προοίμιον )	44:1-15
(ii) γένος (genealogy)	44:16-49:16
(iii) πράξεις (acts)	50:1-21
(iv) Epilogue (ἐπίλογος)	50:22-24 <sup>71</sup>

Lee identifies 44:1, 15 as appeals to praise, and verses 2-7 as a summary of the argument to be developed. He classifies the acts of Simon II into political (verses 1-4) and cultic (verses 5-21). He also draws a correlation between the γένος and the historical summary:

Just as the Greek encomiast would praise his subject's city, the city's enonymous sic ancestors and both the immediate and legendary forefathers of the individual himself, so too we find Jesus Sirach extolling all the fathers of Israel from Adam to Nehemiah.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the standard outline, the encomium was characterized by the use of amplification. Lee lists Ben-Sira's methods of amplification: (1) comparison, (2) inadequacy, (3) unique or unprecedented actions and (4) actions that produced good results.<sup>73</sup>

The use of comparison is described by Lee:

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 265; cf. pp. 265-83 passim.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 271-72.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-64.

. . . Sirach often describes the forefathers in chapters 44-49 in such a way that it forces us to compare them with Simon II in chapter 50. . . . Such a comparison between the subject, Simon, and the appearance and accomplishments of other famous men, was one of the ways in which encomia would make use of παραδείγματα.<sup>74</sup>

Lee cites as instances of comparison: (1) the vestments of Aaron and those of Simon (45:7-11; 50:5, 9, 11); (2) the engineering feats of Solomon (47:13), Hezekiah (48:17), Zerubbabel and Joshua (49:12) and Nehemiah (49:13) compared with those of Simon.<sup>75</sup> Particularly in regard to the priesthood, Lee points out that in the Hebrew text the word "covenant" (ברית) is used of Aaron (45:15), Phinehas (45:24) and Simon II (50:24), thus becoming a catchword for Ben-Sira's priesthood theme.<sup>76</sup>

Cited as an instance of expression of inadequacy is 49:11: "How can we magnify Zerubbabel?" (πῶς μεγαλύνωμεν τὸν Ζοροβάβελ) Several references are given to unique or unprecedented actions, among them 44:19: "Great Abraham was father of multitudes of nations; none has been found equal to him in glory!" (compare 45:13; 48:4, 12-13; 49:14-15) Lee's single reference to actions that produced good results is the entire passage on Simon's acts, 50:1-21. He adds that negative examples are used to enhance Simon's status, for example, Solomon, Jeroboam/Rehoboam, the Northern Kingdom.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-24; cf. pp. 11-19 and the quote of Isocrates Evagoras 33-34 on p. 37 above.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 260-62.

Omission of certain events and persons serves Ben-Sira's encomiastic purpose. The deceitful means of Jacob obtaining the birthright and blessing are not mentioned, nor are the details given of how Phinehas, the "covenant priest," "made atonement for Israel" (45:23). By omitting these not so savory details Ben-Sira makes the spiritual ancestors of Simon II appear more pious than they actually were. Saul and Ezra are omitted.<sup>78</sup>

Ben-Sira also appears to add to the information given in the Masoretic text. He says of Elijah that he will restore the tribes of Jacob (48:10), going beyond the eschatological role given that prophet in Mal. 4:5-6 (3:23-24 MT). When he speaks of Isaiah, it appears the prophet himself lengthens Hezekiah's life (48:23; compare 2 Kings 20:8-11).<sup>79</sup>

The evidence employed by Lee seems to demonstrate conclusively that Sirach 44-50 is an encomium on Simon II. Yet the question remains, is Hebrews 11 an encomium? Above it was stated that Ryken sees Hebrews 11 as an encomium on faith. In his comments on Heb. 12:1-2, however, he suggests a more likely possibility:

The first two verses of Hebrews 12 complete the encomium with a conventional motif, the command to emulate. . . . The writer, in a brilliant stroke, allows the reader to place himself in a long and distinguished line of heroes. . . . The implication is significant; the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11 are intended to serve as a guide and model for believers of later ages. Appropriately, Jesus

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<sup>78</sup> See above pp. 48-49 and Lee, pp. 245-49.

<sup>79</sup> Lee, pp. 250-51.

is held up as the crowning example of faith to whom the reader is urged to look for guidance and the very perfection of his own faith.<sup>80</sup>

The language Ryken uses of Jesus here suggests that the subject of the encomium is not the "abstract quality" of faith, but the person of Jesus himself. Coordinating Ryken's comment with that of Lee that Ben-Sira "invites the congregation to praise the God who has given them such a faithful high priest . . ."<sup>81</sup> drives the interpreter beyond the immediate theme of πίστις back to a (possibly the) major doctrinal theme of Hebrews, Jesus the "faithful High Priest" (πιστός ἄρχιερεὺς , of 2:17). The fact that πιστός is cognate to πίστις reinforces the connection between the appeal made in 12:1-2 and the High Priest concept. Surely it is not without significance that the writer introduces the term in the context of Jesus' High Priesthood in 2:17; 3:2, 5; then does not use it again until the beginning of his major hortatory summary (10:23; 11:11--these five occurrences exhaust the use of this term in Hebrews). In summarizing the point of calling up the "witnesses" in chapter 11, the writer not only calls on his readers to "run the race" (τρέχωμεν τὸν . . . ἀγῶνα ), but urges them to "look to Jesus" (ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν . . . Ἰησοῦν , 12:2) and "consider" (ἀναλογίσασθε , 12:3) Him.

It can be argued, therefore, that Heb. 11:1-12:2 is not an encomium on faith, as Ryken suggests, but, in line with Lee's

<sup>80</sup> Ryken, p. 212.

<sup>81</sup> Lee, p. 318.

thesis on Sirach 44-50, an encomium on Jesus. If this is true, it is significant that the innovation Ben-Sira introduced of "praising men, not God" is resolved in our passage, since the Man who is praised is also God!

In proving this thesis three lines of evidence will be presented: (1) that 12:1-2 is the climax of chapter 11 will be shown by analyzing the particle *τοιγαροῦν* and several major concepts which occur throughout Hebrews, and which converge here; (2) the use of encomiastic methods will be examined, especially the use of the elders of chapter 11 as foils for Jesus; (3) that the *πίστις* concept fits into the exhortation of 12:1 and the immediate context at the conclusion of chapter 10 will be demonstrated by showing that faith (*πίστις*) is the means of endurance (*ὑπομονή*).

As indicated before, many of the passages which make use of historical summary include exhortation and introduce that exhortation by some kind of particle. Particles used by passages which contain exhortation following the historical survey (as Hebrews 11 does) are: (1) *καὶ* (*γὺν*) Deuteronomy 1-4; Psalm 105 (106 MT); 1 Maccabees 2; 3 Maccabees 6; Sirach 44-50; (2) *δὴ* Judith 5; (3) *διὸ* 1 Clement 4-6; (4) *οὖν* 4 Maccabees 16; Acts 13; 1 Clement 9-12; 17-18.

Heb. 12:1 uses the particle *τοιγαροῦν*.<sup>82</sup> Defined by William Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (AGD) as "a particle introducing an

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<sup>82</sup> p<sup>46</sup> reads *τοίγαρ*.



inference for that very reason, then, therefore.<sup>83</sup> The particle occurs from the time of Sophocles and Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) down to that of Achilles Tatius (fourth century A.D.). Its fundamental significance of logical inference is present in the latter (7, 11, 3). Following a rhetorical question, *τογαροδν* is translated: "It is granted at once that . . . ."<sup>84</sup>

The particle is used once elsewhere in the New Testament, 1 Thess. 4:8, and this use also illustrates the basic idea of logical inference. After appealing to the Thessalonians to keep their sex lives pure, Paul states: "For God did not call us for uncleanness, but in sanctification." (verse 7) Based on this he concludes: "Therefore (*τογαροδν*) he who rejects is not rejecting man, but rather God. . . ." (verse 8)

The remaining uses of this particle, both in the Septuagint and extra-biblical Greek, fall into two categories: (1) expressing result and (2) introducing an exhortation. Examples of the first use may be found in the Septuagint (Prov. 1:26, 31; Job 22:10; 2 Macc. 7:23), Philo (On The Virtues 202) and Josephus' Against

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<sup>83</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A translation and adaptation of the fourth revised and augmented edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der uebrigen urchristlichen Literatur, 2nd ed., Revised and Augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker from Walter Bauer's Fifth Edition, 1958. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 821, emphasis theirs.

<sup>84</sup> Achilles Tatius with an English Translation by S. Gaselee (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), ICL p. 375.

Apion, where it is translated: "The result, then . . ." (2, 178).<sup>85</sup>

The hortatory use of the particle occurs also in Josephus (Against Apion 2, 201) and twice in the Septuagint. In Sir. 41:16, after pointing out the foolishness of hiding wisdom, Ben-Sira exhorts: "Therefore respect my word" (τοιγαροῦν ἐυράπητε ἐπὶ τῷ ῥήματί μου). In 4 Macc. 17:4, the author rhetorically addresses the mother of the persecuted Hebrew youths. After showing her courage along with her sons, he encourages her: "Therefore, cheer up, Oh mother!" (θάρρει τοιγαροῦν ὦ μήτηρ).

In Heb. 12:1, this same hortatory use combined with the basic concept of logical inference is seen. τοιγαροῦν introduces a logical inference from the preceding material (chapter 11) and sets up the exhortation (τρέχωμεν) following.

The major themes of Hebrews which will be examined are the following: (1) "faith" (πιστ-); (2) "perfection" (τελ-); (3) "promise" (ἐπαγγελ-); (4) "enduring" (μεν-); (5) "better" (κρείττον); (6) "witness" (μαρτ-); (7) "inheritance" (κληρο-). The chart on the following page records the frequency of occurrence of the concepts and their distribution throughout the book. It should help to illustrate the following argument.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Josephus with an English Translation by the late H. St. J. Thackeray, M.A. and Ralph Marcus, Ph.D. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), ICL I, 365.

<sup>86</sup> A fuller consideration of these concepts with a view to their meaning for the theology of Hebrews will be included in chapter two.

## MAJOR CONCEPTS

## IN HEBREWS

Ch.	<u>ΠΙΟΤ-</u>	<u>ΤΕΛ-</u>	<u>ΞΠΑΥΓΑ-</u>	<u>ΜΕΝ-</u>	<u>ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟΝ</u>	<u>ΜΑΡΤ-</u>	<u>ΚΑΜΟ</u>	Total
1					x		3	4
2	x	x				2		4
3	4	x				x		6
4	2			x				3
5		2						2
6	2	3	4		x		2	12
7		5	x	3	3	2		14
8		2	x	x	2			6
9		4	x		x		x	7
10	4	2	2	3	x	2		14
11	26	x	7		3	5	3	45
12	x	2	x	5	x	x	x	12
13	x			2				3
Total	41	23	18	14	13	13	10	132

x-indicates single occurrence

Some immediate conclusions may be drawn from the data given in the chart. First of all, the major concepts chosen for study occur with greatest frequency in chapters 10-12 and chapters 6-7. Secondly, the concept  $\pi\iota\omicron\tau$  occurs with the greatest frequency, and chapter 11 contains more occurrences of the concepts than the other chapters. This is primarily because of the repetition of  $\pi\acute{\iota}\omicron\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  in chapter 11. However, it should be noted that even without  $\pi\acute{\iota}\omicron\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  chapter 11 would still contain more occurrences of these concepts (18) than any other chapter, and even without chapter 11  $\pi\iota\omicron\tau$  would still be the third most common of the concepts (15 occurrences).

The question now arises, how does all this data support the contention that chapter 12 is the climax of chapter 11? This question will be answered in two ways. First, if it can be shown that chapters 10-12 are the climax of the previous chapters (especially 5-9), the basis will have been provided for looking for a structure within the last three chapters that leads to a climax. Secondly, if it can be shown that chapter 11 itself does not reach a suitable climax, especially in terms of the major themes of the book, it will support the consideration of 12:1-2 as the needed climax.

There are two arguments not specifically involving these seven concepts. At the beginning of the writer's argument concerning the High Priesthood of Christ, he uses the expression "having therefore" ( $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma \omicron\upsilon\nu$ , 4:14). The same expression is repeated at the end of the main argument, as the writer moves into

the final exhortation (10:19). The expression shows up again at 12:1 as "therefore . . . having" (τοὐγαροῦν . . . ἔχοντες). Based on the study of τοὐγαροῦν above, it appears the expression is even stronger here than previously. Although the object of ἔχω here is not Christ as High Priest, nonetheless the writer does connect his exhortation with Christ as pioneer and perfecter of faith by means of a participle (ἀφορῶντες, 12:2). It certainly is fair to say that Christ as High Priest cannot be absent from the readers' (or writer's) minds here.

Secondly, just prior to Hebrews' first mention of Christ as High Priest (2:17) he calls him the ἀρχηγὸν of salvation (2:10). This word does not occur again till 12:2 where Christ is the ἀρχηγὸν of faith. Both of these references contain the concept τελέω in connection with Jesus. The one who was completed through sufferings is also the pioneer and completer of faith for those who are suffering.

It has been mentioned already that the concepts being examined occur more frequently in chapters 10-12. When it is considered that nearly half of the occurrences (64) come in 10:19-12:7, it appears that the previous theological arguments of the book are being pressed on the readers in a hortatory context.

The concept τέλει is of course crucial. There seems to be two "faith cycles" in the book, both of which involve a play on the words τέλει and τέλει. When the former occurs in the first mention of the High Priesthood of Christ (2:17; 3:2, 5) it

is followed by a discussion of the unbelief of the Desert Generation (3:7-4:11). Then comes an exhortation which introduces the central doctrinal argument on Christ's High Priesthood (4:14-16). The second "faith cycle" comes at the conclusion of the central argument with the use of *πιστὸς* (10:23), followed by a lengthy treatment of *πίστις*, featuring the elders who, in contrast to the Desert Generation, are characterized by faith (10:37-11:40). This cycle concludes with the exhortation of 12:1-2.

The theology of promise (*επαγγελ-*) really begins with 6:12 (even though the promise of entering God's rest anticipates this, 4:1). The connection of the promise with faith and with God's oath (6:13-20) lays the groundwork for the encouragement regarding the promise which punctuates the didactic section (7:6; 8:6; 9:15). It becomes prominent in the final exhortation. The distinction between the elders and believers of this age focuses on the verb *κομίζω*. This is used to demonstrate the need for believers to have endurance in order to receive the promise (10:36). By contrast, the men of old did not receive it (11:13, 39). With other verbs it is said that they did receive the promises (11:17; 33). This may be explained by way of anticipation: since Jesus has performed his High Priestly sacrifice, these men of old are now perfected with him and have received the promise (12:23).

The concept *κρείττον* applies here. Undoubtedly the "something better" (11:40) which God foresaw involves all the previous references to better things: the better hope (7:19), based on the

better covenant (7:22; 8:6b), which is established on better promises (8:6c), and based on better sacrifice(s) (9:23). Of course, this also involves Jesus as better than angels (1:4) and Levitical priests (7:7).

*μαρτ-*, the concept of witness, is constantly referred to God. Only in 10:28 is the concept a legal one. God witnesses through miracles (2:4) and the Scripture (2:6; 7:8, 17; 10:15).<sup>87</sup> In chapter 11, God is the implied subject in the "divine passive" of verses 2, 4, 5 and 39.<sup>88</sup> It was through faith that the elders received divine approval (2, 39), being regarded thereby as righteous (4) and pleasing to God (5). It is in this context that the *νέφος μαρτύρων* of 12:1 must be understood. If the elders are "witnessing" our race as spectators in the arena, it is as those approved by God.

Jesus is linked with believers by the concept *κληρο-*. He is "heir of all things" (1:2), and believers are "heirs of salvation" (1:14) and of the promises (6:12; 9:15). The fact that believers inherit by faith (6:12) also links them with the men of old, like Noah (11:7), Abraham (11:8; compare 6:17), Isaac and Jacob (11:9). This points to the connection of heirs of both Old and New Age with the pioneer and perfecter of faith, Jesus (12:2).

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<sup>87</sup> Even in 3:5, where the reference is to Moses, it is in a negative typology with Christ.

<sup>88</sup> See Hughes, Hebrews, p. 441.

The writer also appears to link Jesus with believers by his use of the concept  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\alpha$ .<sup>89</sup> This is particularly true in 2:10, where a result of the perfection of Jesus is the bringing of many sons to glory. In 5:9, Jesus' completion made him the cause of eternal salvation. In 7:28 Jesus is described as "having been perfected" ( $\tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu$ ), and a corollary to this is that he perfects believers (10:14; 12:23). All of this is in contrast to the believers (indeed the elders who lived "by faith") of a previous age. They "should not be perfected without us" (11:40). This statement is understood only in the context of the previous argument showing the weak and provisional status of the former sacrificial system. This inferior status of even the greatest men of faith calls for an appeal to the one who has been perfected and who perfects believers, which is given in the opening verse of chapter 12.

In terms of encomiastic methods, this last point about the inferiority of the elders (despite their exemplary faith) shows that Hebrews uses the encomiastic commonplace of amplification by comparison. Indeed, it is precisely because of the greatness of the deeds the elders accomplished by faith that the reader is surprised by the statement that they were incomplete. This prepares for the introduction of the one who brings them and all believers to completion

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<sup>89</sup> This concept has been reserved till now, since it best illustrates the second point, that ch. 11 does not reach a suitable climax in itself. It also serves as an effective transition to encomiastic methods, since it underlies the idea that the elders are foils for Jesus.



through His one great deed, indeed the greatest of all, enduring the cross.

The use of four other themes by Hebrews in describing the faith of the elders accents their use as foils for Jesus: (1) resurrection; (2) sacrifice; (3) suffering; (4) looking to the unseen. In 11:19 Abraham in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac reckoned that God was able to raise his son from the dead. In fact, the writer goes so far as to say that Isaac was received back *ἐν παραβολῇ*, indicating that this incident actually prefigured Jesus' resurrection. In 11:35, women received their dead by resurrection, and those who were tortured anticipated a better resurrection. These references would bring to the readers' minds the Lord's resurrection, which in turn is implied in 12:2 in the statement that He has sat down at God's right hand.

The offering of sacrifices is mentioned in connection with Abel in 11:4, Abraham in 11:17 and Moses in 11:28 (here the Passover). In the context of the previous teaching on sacrifice, these references anticipate the mention of the cross in 12:2. Jesus offered a sacrifice of much greater value and effect than those of the elders.

The suffering of the elders is reflected in the mention of death in connection with Abel (*ἀποθανῶν*, 11:4), Jacob (*ἀποθνήσκων*, 11:21), Joseph (*τελευτῶν*, 11:22) and the elders generally (*ἀπέθανον*, 11:13). The suffering of the elders in general is dealt with at length in 11:35b-38, summed up with the statement

"This world (ὁ κόσμος) was not worthy of them." (11:38) The emphasis on suffering, however, seems to be centered on Moses. He "chose to be mistreated with (συγκακουχεῖσθαι) God's people." (11:25) For him the treasures of Egypt could not compare with the wealth of "the shame of Christ" (τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 11:26). This last especially is echoed in 12:2, where it is stated that Jesus "despised the humiliation (αἰσχύνῃς)" of the cross. The theme of suffering is reflected in the claim that Jesus "endured the cross" (ὑπέμενε τὸν σταυρὸν). While the elders suffered by faith, the suffering of the pioneer and perfecter of faith resulted in their completion.

Several different expressions emphasize the theme of "looking to the unseen." The participle βλεπομένων is repeated in 11:1, 3, 7 in the context of the nature of faith (verse 1), faith's perception of the universe (verse 3) and Noah's faith in face of the coming flood (verse 7). In 11:8, Abraham departed by faith "not realizing" (μὴ ἐπιστάμενος) where he was going. The elders saw the promises "from afar" (πρόρρωθεν, 11:13) and longed for a "heavenly" (ἐπουρανίου) city (11:16). Isaac's blessing concerned "coming things" (περὶ μελλόντων, 11:20). Moses persevered "as seeing the Unseen" (ἀόρατον ὡς ὄρων, 11:27). All of this teaching on faith as "seeing the Unseen" undoubtedly anticipates the call in 12:2 to "look away to . . . Jesus (ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν . . . Ἰησοῦν )." The elders are examples for Hebrews' readers; not examples of great deeds, but of an attitude of faith, which for the readers means looking to Jesus.

Lee's encomiastic outline for Sirach 44-50 was presented above.<sup>90</sup> An encomiastic outline for Heb. 11:1-12:2 is proposed here:

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|----------------------------|------------|
| (i) Prooemium (προοίμιον ) | 11:1-3     |
| (ii) γένος (genealogy)     | 11:4-38    |
| (iii) Epilogue (ἐπίλογος ) | 11:39-12:2 |

It will be noted immediately that one part of the traditional four-part outline has been left out, the πράξεις (acts). The general outline given by Lee above summarizes practice by encomiasts, divergence from which was not uncommon.<sup>91</sup> Hebrews has varied the πράξεις by including it in both the γένος and ἐπίλογος. This variation functions as a method of amplification by comparison. The acts of the elders, included in the γένος of 11:4-38, which were done by faith, serve to highlight the supreme act (ἡ πράξις) of the pioneer and perfecter of faith, Jesus. His endurance of the cross surpasses all the great faith-acts of the elders.

The prooemium in 11:1-3 introduces the catchword by describing the nature of faith and its relation to perception of the universe (verses 1, 3). It also summarizes the argument by referring to the role of the elders (verse 2). The role of the γένος in

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<sup>90</sup> P. 53.

<sup>91</sup> Above pp. 37-38; cf. Lee, pp. 224-43.

setting out the elders as foils for Jesus has been referred to. The epilogue stresses this theme in summarizing the approval of the elders by faith, while at the same time emphasizing their incompleteness (11:39-40). The appeal to emulation then calls for imitation not of the elders who were approved by faith, but of Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

This last point is seen more clearly by examining Hebrews' use of the concept of endurance (*ὑπομονή* / *ὑπομένειν*). The readers, although they have endured suffering (10:32), still have need of endurance (10:36). The immediate movement to the subject of faith (10:37-39) points to faith as the means by which endurance is possible. This emphasis is sustained in chapter 11 with the theme of suffering mentioned above. The term *ὑπομονή* comes up again in 12:1 as the readers are encouraged to run *δι' ὑπομονῆς*. The attention of believers is turned to Jesus, the prime example of endurance (12:2, 3),<sup>92</sup> who is at the same time pioneer and perfecter of faith. The two ideas of faith and endurance are so closely linked at the end of chapter 10 and the beginning of chapter 12, yet they are not found together in chapter 11. It seems apparent that Jesus as the example of endurance is the object of faith.

In order to substantiate the claim that Heb. 11:1-12:2 reflects encomiastic methods, it is necessary to establish at least the probability that the author of Hebrews would have been aware

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<sup>92</sup> The only other occurrence of this concept in Hebrews is at 12:7, where the readers are exhorted to endure God's discipline.

of the encomium as a literary form. Lee shows as much for Ben-Sira:

With the works of Theocritus and Callimachus, then, we find the presence of the poetic encomium in Ptolemaic Alexandria, even as its prose counterpart was known there in the Socrates of Demetrius of Phaleron. Could it not be that such encomia, together with their predecessors, were among the materials with which Sirach became acquainted . . .? . . . if he had not come into contact with Greek literature and rhetoric in Palestine, he certainly could not have escaped it in the Ptolemaic capital.<sup>93</sup>

An Alexandrine provenance has been suggested for Hebrews; that its author knew Sirach is possible:

In view of the important place occupied by Sirach in the Wisdom-literature, and the popularity enjoyed by this literature, especially among the Jews of the Greek Dispersion, it would be surprising not to find any traces of its influence on those books of the New Testament which markedly reflect the Alexandrine spirit. If there are no actual citations of Sirach in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there are at least some possible indications of acquaintance with it (in its Greek form).<sup>94</sup>

It is possible, then, that Hebrews follows the encomium form in Sirach 44-50, adapting it to his own argument. It is not impossible that Hebrews knew the encomium form independently of Sirach, and adapted it on his own.

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<sup>93</sup> Lee, p. 193.

<sup>94</sup> G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley in R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 294.

Finally, it is worth noting that the repetition of within chapter 11 is sometimes taken as a literary device used to bring this hortatory section to a climax. It is preferable to say that it is used to lead up to the real climax in 12:1-2. If chapter 11 were in itself climactic, it would not include teaching on the inherent incompleteness of the elders it highlights (11:13-16, 39-40). That it does include such teaching serves to show that this chapter is not designed to point out the "virtues of past generations" or even to praise the principle of faith per se, but to point (as did all the ministries and institutions of the old age) to "the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith--Jesus" (τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν -- Ἰησοῦν)!

## CHAPTER 2

### THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF HEBREWS 11

Not only does the encomium form of Heb. 11:1-12:2 support the idea that faith is the means of Christian endurance, as shown in the previous chapter, but it can also be demonstrated exegetically that the theological argument of Heb. 11:1-12:2 is: faith (πίστις) is the means of endurance (ὑπομονή). The purpose of Hebrews is to encourage the New Covenant community to endure suffering by dependence on Jesus the great High Priest (that is, by faith).

#### AN OUTLINE OF HEBREWS<sup>1</sup>

Prologue	The Final Revelation in the Son	1:1-3
I	The Son Greater than Angels	1:4-2:18
	A. He is what angels are not-- God	1:4-14
	B. Warning to heed the message	2:1-4
	C. He did what angels could not do-- took on flesh and blood and died for sin	2:5-18

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<sup>1</sup> Nauck proposes an outline based on the main hortatory themes of the letter: "Hear!" (1:1-4:13); "Draw Near!" (4:14-10:31); "Stand fast!" (10:32-13:17). While this outline has much to commend it, it makes too little of the central doctrinal section (5:1-10; 7:1-10:18). See Wolfgang Nauck, "Zum Aufbau des Hebraeerbriefes" in Judentum Urchristentum Kirche, Festschrift fuer Joachim Jeremias, 2nd ed., Ed. Walter Eltester, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift fuer die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 26 (Berlin: Alfred Toepelmann, 1964), 199-206.

II	Jesus and the Desert Generation	3:1-4:13
	A. The Son greater than the servant-- Jesus & Moses	3:1-6
	B. God's Sabbath and the peril of unbelief	3:7-4:11
	C. The vital nature of God's Word	4:12-13
III	Jesus the Great High Priest	4:14-10:18
	A. The call to approach God boldly through our great High Priest	4:14-16
	B. Comparison of Jesus & Aaron	5:1-10
	C. Excursus: the peril of immaturity and the immutable promise of God	5:11-6:20
	D. The better priesthood of our great High Priest--Melchizedek vs. Levi	7:1-28
	E. The New and better Covenant of our great High Priest	8:1-13
	F. The better Tent of our great High Priest	9:1-28
	G. The better sacrifice of our great High Priest	10:1-18
IV	Jesus and the Sufferings of the New Covenant Community	10:19-12:29
	A. The call to approach God boldly through the blood of Jesus	10:19-25
	B. The peril of sin against the covenant	10:26-31
	C. The call to endure suffering by faith	10:32-39
	D. An encomium on the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith	11:1-12:2
	<u>Prooemium</u>	11:1-3
	<u>Genealogy</u>	11:4-38
	<u>Epilogue</u>	11:39-12:2



	E. The Lord's discipline	12:3-13
	F. A call to sanctification	12:14-17
	G. Mt. Zion vs. Mt. Sinai	12:18-29
Epilogue	Concluding Exhortations	13:1-21
	Epistolary Postscript	13:22-25

The prologue focuses attention on the finality of God's revelation in Christ by contrasting it with the partial and temporary revelation given through the prophets. The writer contrasts the Son to all previous channels of revelation--He is God Himself and has made cleansing for sin.

In the first two chapters the person and work of the Son of God is expounded. By drawing on a series of Scriptural quotations, the first chapter indicates that the term "Son" as used of Jesus means that he is nothing less than the eternal God, and the author warns, in the opening verses of chapter 2, that a message from such a source is more than worthy of our attention. In a pointed interpretation of Psalm 8, Hebrews shows that the Son of Man became lower than the angels in order to perform his High Priestly work of dying for sin--something angels could not do.

The two major points in chapters 3-4 are: (1) Jesus is superior to Moses (3:1-6) and (2) the true "Sabbath" can be enjoyed only by faith. The key words in the comparison of Jesus and Moses are "faithful" (πιστός, compare "faithful High Priest," 2:17) and "Son" (1:2, 5, 8). While Moses may have been a faithful servant, a faithful son is clearly superior to a servant.

The term "faithful" leads to the subject of "faith," or rather the "unfaith" ( , 3:12, 19) of the Desert Generation. The extended treatment of Psalm 95 (94 LXX) interprets an institution of the Old Covenant, the Sabbath. God's true rest, or Sabbath, was not found in the Desert, nor in Canaan; indeed, still in David's time a rest was available which could only be entered by faith (4:11).

It is no mistake that the emphasis on faith and the rest left for God's people should immediately precede the central section on Jesus as High Priest. It is His High Priestly work that makes it possible for the believer to rest from his own works and rest in Him. Indeed, the call to approach God's throne boldly (4:14-16) is based on Jesus' status as the great High Priest.

The author begins to develop his argument by showing that Jesus, like Aaron, met the conditions for priesthood (5:1-9). Christ's priesthood is of a higher order, that of Melchizedek (5:6, 10). The mention of Melchizedek reminds the writer that his readers are too spiritually immature for their chronological age as Christians, and he warns them against continuing to stagnate. After pointing out the sad result of such a course (6:4-8), he reassures them of his confidence in them (6:9-12) and encourages them with the certainty of God's promise (6:13-20).<sup>2</sup>

In chapter seven begins the major doctrinal theme of the High

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<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of Hebrews' concept of Christian growth, see H. P. Owen, "The 'Stages of Ascent' in Heb. v.11-vi.3," New Testament Studies 3 (1956-57), 243-53.

Priesthood of Christ. Here the priesthood of Melchizedek is contrasted with that of Levi through a series of comparisons, most of them set up with the use of particles *μὲν*, *δὲ* and the like (verses 5, 6, 8, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24).

There is a brief summary of this argument in the opening verses of chapter eight, followed by an extended quotation of Jeremiah's "New Covenant" prophecy (Jer. 38 [31 MT]; 31-34). Hebrews' interpretation of the prophecy shows that even in the time of Jeremiah the Mosaic covenant was old and ready to be replaced.

In the summary at the beginning of chapter eight, the author anticipates his argument in chapter nine by claiming that the Sacred Tent on earth was only a model of the true Tent in heaven (8:2, 5). Now the argument is developed more fully, the importance of death and blood in the covenant being especially emphasized in addition to the fact that Christ's work was accomplished once and only once.

The central argument is concluded with an emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ. In 10:1-18 the writer contrasts Christ's sacrifice with that of the animals under the Old Covenant, presents a carefully constructed interpretation of Psalm 39 (40 MT), and ties the offering of Christ into the New Covenant. From this psalm, Hebrews draws out the term "offering" (*προσφορά*), "body" (*σῶμα*, LXX only) and "will" (*θέλημα*) and applies them to his conclusions regarding Christ's sacrifice ("offering," verses 14, 18; "body" and "will," verse 10).

Hebrews then moves into the application of the argument to the readers' situation. The rejection of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant community had led to persecution at the hands of the Judaistic establishment (10:32-34). In the final major section (10:19-12:29), which is primarily hortatory, the writer shows that Jesus has suffered to the point of death in carrying out his High Priestly sacrifice, and that the readers can endure suffering by looking to Him.

The final section begins the same way as the previous major section, with a call to approach God boldly (10:19-22; compare 4:14-16). Here the emphasis is on Jesus' blood which has opened the way into God's presence for us. Following the exhortation to encourage one another in love and good works comes a warning regarding sinning against the covenant. Once again the blood of the covenant is in view. As in a previous warning where reassurance is immediately added (6:1-12), the writer calls upon the readers to remember the sufferings they have endured. He encourages them to remain confident, and reminds them of the need of endurance (*ὑπομονή*). This leads to the introduction of a quotation from Hab. 2:3-4 (10:37-38), from which "faith" (*πίστις*) is taken as the thematic term.

The encomium which follows ties together the terms "faith" and "endurance" and shows that faith (looking to Jesus) is the means of endurance. The emphasis on endurance continues as the writer develops the idea that suffering is evidence of the Lord's

discipline. He points to Jesus as the example of endurance in 12:3, and specifically makes discipline the goal of endurance in 12:7.

Hebrews issues a final call to sanctification before the impressive climax contrasting Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion. Once again the blood of the covenant is recalled (12:24) and a warning against refusing God's voice is issued. After an encouraging reminder that the kingdom which believers receive is unshakeable, the author sounds a solemn and climactic note: "Our God is a consuming fire!"

The exhortations which begin chapter thirteen do not appear to be directly related to the major doctrinal and hortatory arguments of the book.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, verses 9-16 allude to two previous themes. First of all, Hebrews urges the readers to go "outside the camp bearing his shame" (verse 13). This fits in with the purpose of warning them against rejecting the New Covenant by returning to the Old Covenant community of contemporary Judaism. Secondly, the theme of the High Priesthood of Christ is applied in the brief development of a theology of believer priesthood.

In reexamining the final hortatory section, section IV, the similarities between the exhortation which opens this section and that which opened section III should be noted. Similar elements include: (1) the first words  $\epsilon\chi\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$ ; (2) the mention of

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<sup>3</sup> Even Filson, who shows connections between ch. 13 and chs. 1-12, admits that ch. 13 is "a more informal addition to the preceding formal discussion" in 'Yesterday': A Study of Hebrews in the Light of Chapter 13 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1967), p. 82.

Jesus as the great priest *ἀρχιερέα μέγαν* (4:14), *ἱερέα μέγαν* (10:21); (3) the exhortation to approach *προσερχώμεθα* (4:16; 10:22); (4) the emphasis on boldness *παρρησία* (4:16; 10:19) and (5) the exhortation to hold fast the confession *κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας* (4:14), *κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν* (10:23). These similarities demonstrate that the teaching developed in section III is now being applied in section IV.

Section IV A (10:19-25) begins with an emphasis on the new way into the Holiest Place prepared by the great Priest, particularly mentioning the blood of Jesus. The previous teaching, especially in chapter 9, prepares for the mention of Christ's blood here. There follow three exhortations: (1) "Let us approach!" (*προσερχώμεθα*, verse 22); (2) "Let us hold fast!" (*κατέχωμεν*, verse 23); (3) "Let us consider!" (*κατανοῶμεν*, verse 24). These exhortations stress the importance of faith in Christ as the basis for the production of love and good works. Connected with the third exhortation is an implicit warning against forsaking the New Covenant community. This leads into the explicit warning concerning sin against the covenant.

The sin mentioned in 10:26-31 is described as sinning "deliberately" (*ἔκουσίως*). The writer may be thinking here of the distinction between deliberate and inadvertent sin made in Numbers 15. It is not unlikely that in the latter passage the deliberate sin is sin against the covenant, as the illustration of the

Sabbath breaker (verses 32-36) may be intended to show.<sup>4</sup> The language used by Hebrews regarding the law of Moses (verse 28) and the blood of the covenant (verse 29) shows that it is the sin against the covenant which is in view here. Certainly desertion of the New Covenant community (verse 25) would be regarded as sin against that covenant, particularly if it involves returning to the Old Covenant community.

After this severe warning the writer immediately assures his readers of his confidence in their Christian character in 10:32-39, as he had done previously in 6:9. His reminder to them that they have endured (ὑπεμείνατε, verse 32) sufferings tacitly commends them for not deserting the covenant community in order to avoid those sufferings. Possibly preparing them for further suffering, Hebrews advises not to throw away their confidence (παρηγοία, verse 35) and mentions their need of endurance (ὑπομονή, verse 36). In the quotation from Habakkuk mentioned above, the writer refers to Christ's Parousia (verse 37), then to the contrast between living by faith and drawing back (verse 38). The last two concepts are the focus of the application of the quotation in verse 39. Of course it is to ΠΙΣΤΙΣ that Hebrews turns for the key-word of the succeeding encomium.

In 12:3, to reinforce the plea to run with endurance by looking to Jesus (12:1-2), the readers are urged to "consider the One who has endured (ὑπομεμενηκότα) such hostility of sinners. . . ."

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<sup>4</sup> Exod. 31:12-17 seems to connect the Sabbath with the Mosaic covenant.

The theme of blood recurs in 12:4 in connection with suffering as God's discipline. By telling his readers they have not yet resisted to the point of blood, he connects the suffering of Jesus on the cross with the suffering of believers under God's discipline. Indeed discipline is the purpose for which they endure (*εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε*, verse 7).

To summarize the immediate context of Heb. 11:1-12:2, the writer is pressing on the readers the need to remain loyal to the great High Priest of the New Covenant and to His New Covenant community. This will entail suffering, possibly to the point of bloodshed, but the believers are to endure suffering as the discipline of a loving Father. Chapter eleven will show that the means of endurance is faith, that is, "seeing the Unseen," or "looking to Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith."

The basis for the Greek text will be the 26th edition of Nestle's Novum Testamentum Graece.<sup>5</sup> The text is well attested. The two papyrus manuscripts which give Heb. 11:1-12:2 are p<sup>13</sup> and p<sup>46</sup>. The former is dated third or fourth century and tends to follow the Alexandrian tradition, although it shows some independence in this passage. P<sup>46</sup> is the Chester Beatty papyrus and like p<sup>13</sup> shows Alexandrian affinities, but with a greater propensity for unique readings.

There are four major early uncial manuscripts, of which three

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<sup>5</sup> Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger and Allen Wikgren, Novum Testamentum Graece, 26th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979).



are Alexandrian: Sinaiticus ( ), fourth century; Alexandrinus (A), fifth century; Washington (I), fifth century. A Western witness is Claromontanus (DP), sixth century. The witness of later uncials, minuscules, versions and Church Fathers will be given as needed in the commentary section. Discussion will focus mainly on readings where the text given here departs from Nestle 26. These departures will be marked in the text with an asterisk (\*).

The commentary will include a structural analysis of Heb. 11:1-12:2. A word needs to be said about the syntactical or rhetorical method of text analysis. The underlying assumption of this method is that the meaning of the text can only be determined by the meaning of the words of that text itself, as they are arranged into paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases. The syntactical analysis, accordingly, is an attempt to determine what are the major assertions of the writer, and how he supports those assertions with coordinate or subordinate assertions. Kaiser clarifies how the procedure works by enumerating the initial steps:

Exegetes would be well advised to begin their work on a paragraph by: (1) isolating the theme proposition or sentence; (2) identifying all natural divisions in the paragraph as suggested by Hebrew accent marks, Greek particles, and overall punctuation; (3) underscoring all connectors such as relative pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and transitional adverbs; and (4) noting the antecedents for each subordinated or coordinated word, phrase, clause, or sentence. . . .

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<sup>6</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 99.

Application of this method to the use of "faith" as a structural catchword in chapter eleven is illustrated in the chart on the following page. The indentation of verses 2-39 and the arrow pointing to "faith" in verse 1 show how Hebrews illustrates the topic sentence of the chapter by a long series of subordinate clauses.

The topic sentence is 11:1, not only of 11:1-7, but indeed of the entire chapter. Clearly each repetition of *πίστει* brings the reader back to the initial statements about faith. In addition, the *κατὰ πίστιν* of verse 13 and the *διὰ πίστεως* of verses 33 and 39 also refer back to 11:1. Even if all these references to faith actually refer to 11:2 by showing the circumstances surrounding the approval of the elders, 11:2 itself, by opening with *ἐν ταύτῃ γάρ* ("for by it"), refers to 11:1.

Beyond this major structural unit, analysis reveals eight paragraphs in Heb. 11:1-12:2: (1) 11:1-7; (2) 11:8-12; (3) 11:13-16; (4) 11:17-22; (5) 11:22-31; (6) 11:32-38; (7) 11:39-40; (8) 12:1-2.<sup>7</sup> Structural analysis of these units will be included in the commentary. Major assertions are nearest to the margin, with indentation indicating levels of coordination and subordination, and arrows indicating elements to which clauses and phrases are subordinate. . . .

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<sup>7</sup> For a different structural analysis based on verbal cues see Albert Vanhoye, La structure littéraire de l'Épître aux Hébreux (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), pp. 183-95.

Major assertions of Hebrews 11

- <sup>1</sup> Now faith is the basis of what is hoped for, etc.
- <sup>2</sup> for by it the ancients were approved.
- <sup>3</sup> By faith we realize that the universe, etc.
- <sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered to God, etc.
- <sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was transferred, etc.
- <sup>7</sup> By faith Noah constructed a boat, etc.
- <sup>8</sup> By faith he who\* was named Abraham obeyed, etc.
- <sup>9</sup> By faith he stayed temporarily, etc.
- <sup>11</sup> By faith he received strength, etc.
- <sup>13</sup> These all died according to faith, etc.
- <sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham offered up, etc.
- <sup>20</sup> By faith also Isaac blessed, etc.
- <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob blessed, etc.
- <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph brought to mind, etc.
- <sup>23</sup> By faith Moses was hidden, etc.
- <sup>24</sup> By faith Moses refused, etc.
- <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, etc.
- <sup>28</sup> By faith he celebrated the Passover, etc.
- <sup>29</sup> By faith they crossed the Red Sea, etc.
- <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell, etc.
- <sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish, etc.
- <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, etc.
- <sup>39</sup> So all these (although approved because of this faith), did not receive the promise, etc.

COMMENTARY

As noted earlier, this passage appears to be a climactic exhortation interweaving the two major themes of πίστις and ὑπομονή. The way in which this is done calls forth from Spicq the designation "eloquent":

This chapter concerning the virtue of faith and its powerful effect is famous and moving; it certainly constitutes one of the most eloquent and majestic texts of the Bible, and of all literature. . . . Its length and exceptional homogeneity does not by any means permit it to be considered as a digression or an excursus . . . much less an interpolation.<sup>8</sup>

Vanhoye adduces four arguments for the unity of the first paragraph (verses 1-7): (1) "faith," repeated at the beginning of each verse, is met with again at the end of verse 7; (2) the participle βλεπομένων ("things which are seen") used with a negative forms an enclosure of verses 1 and 7; it is used again in verse 3 without a negative; otherwise, it does not occur in Hebrews; (3) this first paragraph is characterized by μαρτυρεῖν ("to witness"), which occurs four times in the first five verses, otherwise only in verse 39 in this chapter; (4) the name "God" occurs six times in

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<sup>8</sup> Ce chapitre sur la vertu de foi et son dynamisme est célèbre et émouvant; il constitue assurément l'un des textes le plus éloquentes et les plus majestueux de la Bible et de toutes les littératures. . . . Sa longueur et son exceptionnelle homogénéité n'autorisent nullement à le considérer comme une digression ou un excursus . . . et encore moins une interpolation. Spicq, Hébreux II, 334.

verses 3-6, as often as it occurs from verses 8-40.<sup>9</sup> Apart from these arguments, another unifying factor is that the elders mentioned in these verses are all antediluvian.

The paragraph begins with a statement on the nature of faith (verses 1-3), and continues with a description of the faith-acts of three ante-diluvian elders, Abel, Enoch and Noah. The historical scope of the paragraph covers the period from Creation to the Flood.

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the basis of what is hoped for, the proof  
 of things which cannot be seen;  
 ↑  
<sup>2</sup> for by it the ancients were approved.

"Now" translates the particle δὲ which connects the πίστις of this verse with the same term in 10:39, and thereby to the quotation from Hab. 2:3-4. The purpose, in connection with 10:36 and 12:1, is to show that faith is the means of endurance. "Basis" is translated by the Vulgate as substantia and by Berkeley as "solid ground." The translation "basis" is supported by Moulton-Milligan's analysis: "in all cases there is the same central idea of something that underlies visible conditions and guarantees a future possession."<sup>10</sup> "Proof" is the first meaning given by AGD,<sup>11</sup> and there are examples of it in both legal and non-legal contexts (for

<sup>9</sup> Vanhoye, La structure, p. 184.

<sup>10</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the papyri and other non-literary sources (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1952), p. 660 (emphasis theirs).

<sup>11</sup> AGD, ἔλεγχος 1., p. 249.

example, Job 23:4, 7 [parallel to κρίμα ]; Josephus Against Apion 2, 17; P Oxy II 237<sup>viii.17</sup> [A.D. 186]). A good parallel to the second half of this verse in both grammar and content is 2 Cor. 4:18.

Is this verse a definition or a description of faith? Expositors since Calvin have argued for the latter. The thrust of their understanding has been succinctly stated by Marcus Dods: "The words thus become a definition of what faith does, not of what it is."<sup>12</sup> Others speak of a definition of faith here or, like Hughes, a limited definition.<sup>13</sup> It may be best to say that Hebrews is addressing the nature of faith, both as to its essence and its effects.

"Were approved" is a divine passive, implying that God is the one giving the approval.<sup>14</sup> The author gives his strategy in advance--not only will he show that the ancients were approved by faith, he will also show how.

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<sup>12</sup> Marcus Dods, The Epistle to the Hebrews in The Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), IV, 352; cf. John Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter, trans. William B. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 157 and Spicq, Hébreux, II, 336.

<sup>13</sup> Hughes, Hebrews, p. 438.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> By faith we realize that the universe has been created by God's Word, so that what can be seen has not come into being from what is visible.

"So that . . . not . . . from what is visible" is translated by the Vulgate as ex invisibilibus visibilia fierent and by Luther as aus nichts geworden ist. That this is a statement of creation ex nihilo is doubtful, since it probably refers to the Genesis narrative, in which the phrase וַיֵּרָא וַיִּבְרָא (Gen. 1:2) probably does not mean "nothingness," or the like.<sup>15</sup> The importance of this verse is its claim that faith accepts the Word of God regarding an event at which there were no eye-witnesses (faith = "seeing the unseen"). In addition, the author begins the historical summary with the opening words of the Bible.

The theological significance of these opening verses revolves around their revelation of the nature of faith. This is central not just for the development of faith in the succeeding historical survey, but also for the meaning of faith and its relationship to the divine Word and promise within Hebrews itself, as well as

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<sup>15</sup> See excursus, "The Doctrine of Creation in Hebrews 11:3" in Hughes, Hebrews, pp. 443-52; cf. Franz Delitzsch, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, 2 vols., trans. Thomas L. Kingsbury (London: T. & T. Clark, 1871), II, 215-23; Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Hebräer: Uebersetzt und erkläert, 12th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 381-83; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), #433.3, p. 224.

throughout the entire scope of Biblical revelation.<sup>16</sup>

Faith is an attitude or perspective from which the unseen becomes visible. This involves the concept of hope since, as Paul says, "who hopes for what he sees? Yet if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it patiently" (Rom. 8:24-25). It also applies to the promise, since a promise is by definition to be fulfilled in the future, and therefore its realization is presently unseen. This is why faith is called the "basis" of hope, since what underlies the promise is the divine character, and the only hope for realization of the promise is trust in that character. If the elders had not trusted that God was both able and willing to fulfill his promises, it could not be said that they acted "by faith."

The consequence of this attitude of trust, this seeing of the unseen, on the part of the elders is divine approval. It is not as if they received divine approval for their actions because the actions themselves were pleasing to God; rather God approved their trusting recognition of his character, and therefore the actions which grew from this attitude were pleasing to Him.

The nature of faith as an attitude is stressed by its association with the perception of the universe. If there is a Scriptural event which is not verifiable from an empirical standpoint, it is the creation of the universe by the utterance (*ῥήμα*) of God. Therefore perception must be based solely on trust in the veracity

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<sup>16</sup> See below for word study on "faith" (πιστ- ).



of the Creator who revealed his own creative activity.

These three verses, then, show that faith is an attitude of trust by which the believer sees the unseen and thereby sets his hope on the divine promise. This attitude, which depends on revelation rather than empirical verification, is approved by God, and through it the believer acts in a way that pleases Him.

<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain,  
 through which he was approved as righteous,  
 and (God bearing witness regarding his gifts)  
 through it, though dead, he still speaks.

"Bearing witness" (*μαρτυροῦντες*) must be considered subordinate to "to be righteous" (*εἶναι δίκαιος*) rather than to the main verb "offered" (*προσήνευκεν*). The participial phrase is a parenthetical description of how Abel's acceptance as righteous was manifested rather than a circumstantial clause describing events connected with the sacrifice.

That sacrificial terminology is purposely used here to bring to mind the sacrifice of Christ is indicated by the explicit comparison between Abel and Christ in 12:24. Why was Abel's sacrifice "better" than Cain's? Clearly the text emphasizes Abel's faith. Abel's sacrifice was accepted not because of his goodness (Aquinas), nor because his was a blood sacrifice (John Owen,

based on Heb. 9:22), but simply because of his faith (Calvin).<sup>17</sup>

"Through which" and "through it" are ambiguous, since both "faith" and "sacrifice" are feminine. However, in light of the emphatic position of ΠΙΟΤΕΙ at the beginning of the verse and the constant emphasis on faith throughout the chapter (cf. ἐν ταύτῃ, verse 2 and δι' ἧς, verse 7), it is best to take both as referring to "faith."<sup>18</sup>

5 By faith Enoch was transferred  
 so as not to see death  
 (indeed, he wasn't found  
 because God transferred him).  
 For previous to the transfer he was  
 approved as pleasing to God--  
 6 but apart from faith it is impossible  
 to "please,"  
 because the one who approaches God  
 must believe  
 that He exists  
 and  
 that he becomes a rewarder  
 to those who seek Him out.

<sup>17</sup> Aquinas quoted in Hughes, Hebrews, pp. 454-55; cf. Spicq, Hébreux, II, 342; and for a concise contrast of the views of Owen and Calvin see Bruce, Hebrews, p. 285, n. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Hughes, Hebrews, p. 455; cf. Delitzsch, Hebrews, pp. 224, 227; Michel, Hebraerbrief, p. 384.

The verb "pleasing" occurs only in Hebrews in the New Testament (11:5, 6; 13:16). This meaning is found in a marriage contract from the first century (P Oxy II.265<sup>48</sup>, A.D. 81-95). The expression in Hebrews is drawn from the Septuagint Gen. 5:22, 24; εὐηρέσθησεν Ἐνωχ τῷ θεῷ (compare Gen. 6:9 τῷ θεῷ εὐηρέσθησεν Νωε [The Hebrew verb is תָּרַן Hithpael]).

God is the implied object of "to 'please'," but the text has been translated more literally to emphasize the development of this concept from the previous verse. The comments on pleasing God demonstrate that it was not the acts of the elders which were approved by God, but rather their faith.

"To approach God" is a central concept in Hebrews, occurring previously in 4:16; 7:25; 10:22. With this brief comment the writer established faith as an abiding component of the proper approach to God in any age.

<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah constructed a boat  
 having been warned by revelation  
 concerning things not yet seen,  
 out of reverence  
 for the preservation of his family,  
 through which he condemned the world;  
 and  
 he became heir of the righteousness based on  
 faith.

"Out of reverence" is to be preferred to "out of caution" in light of the use of the noun (εὐλάβεια) elsewhere in Hebrews (5:7; 12:28) and the insistence here that Noah acted "by faith."<sup>19</sup> The translation "ark" has become sacrosanct, and only the Good News Bible dares to depart from it ("boat"). The Greek word and its Hebrew equivalent both mean "box" or "chest," suggesting the possible translation "box-boat."<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis of verses 8-12 is on Abraham's obedience to the divine command (following a similar theme in verse 7), his living as a pilgrim, and the fulfillment of God's promise of a child--all by faith.

<sup>8</sup> By faith he who\* was named "Abraham" obeyed by departing to a place

he would later receive in possession--

indeed,

he went out not realizing where he is going

The first departure from Nestle 26 is in reading the article ὁ before Ἀβρααμ . This is found in p<sup>46</sup> A D\* 33 1739 1881. Omission is supported by κ D<sup>c</sup> Ψ Majority text. Despite the fact that

<sup>19</sup> See AGD, pp. 322-23.

<sup>20</sup> AGD, p. 431; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic; based on the lexicon of William Gesenius as translated by Edward Robinson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 1061.

none of the other proper names in the chapter following have the article, it should be included on the basis of the manuscript evidence and the fact that it is the more difficult reading. The adoption of the article demands the translation "he who was named." Undoubtedly "is going" represents a historical present, which would normally be translated as past. The English present tense reflects the vividness of the original.<sup>21</sup>

9 By faith he stayed temporarily in the Promised Land  
as though it were foreign,  
residing in tents  
with Isaac and Jacob, the co-  
heirs of the same promise.

10 For he was expecting the city which has  
foundations,  
whose designer and  
craftsman is God.

"Foreign" refers to the land, not to Abraham. The imperfect "he was expecting" stresses the constant longing of Abraham for the world beyond, as further developed in verses 13-16. "The city" is the first mention in Hebrews of a theme repeated in verse 16, 12:22 and 13:14. The New Testament hapax legomenon "designer" is used in other early Christian literature of divine activity, but also in non-Christian Greek (Epictetus 2, 8, 21;

<sup>21</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 185.

Josephus Antiquities 1, 155; Philo On the Change of Names 29-31  
 [used with *τεχνιτεύσας* and *ἀρχιτέκτονος*, ICL V, 158].

<sup>11</sup> By faith he received strength to plant seed,  
 (even though Sarah herself was sterile)  
 even beyond the normal age,  
 since he considered the One who  
 promised worthy of trust

<sup>12</sup> Therefore even from one man there came into  
 being\*  
 (and he as good as dead)  
 as many as the stars of the sky,  
 and  
 as innumerable as the sand on the  
 seashore.

One would expect "received" (*ἔλαβεν*) and "considered" (*ἠγήσατο*) to be coordinate verbs. The latter has been subordinated to the former in the syntactical diagram because *ἕτερι* signals a statement of the reason why Abraham received power (really a description of the nature of his faith).

The insertion of *στευρα* between *Σαππα* and *δυναμιν* is witnessed by p<sup>46</sup> D\* Ψ lat syr. Omission is supported by p<sup>13</sup> (possibly) א A D<sup>c</sup> K 33 Majority text. The readings *στευρα ουσα* P and *η στευρα* 69 1739 are clearly late and need not be taken into account. The problem of whether to read this additional word

is complicated by several linguistic factors. First of all, the expression *δυναμιν λαμβανειν* was regularly used in Greek of the male, not the female.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, an influence from Hebrew may be operative here. Metzger explains:

. . . a majority of the Committee understood the words *καὶ αὐτὴ Σάρρα στείρα* to be a Hebraic circumstantial clause, thus allowing *Αβρααμ* (ver. 8) to serve as subject of *ἔλαβεν* ("by faith, even though Sarah was barren, he [Abraham] received power to beget. . . ."<sup>23</sup>

Now if *στείρα* is omitted, it is hard to understand how the subject of *ἐλαβεν* could be understood as anything but *Σάρρα*. *στείρα* is included in the accompanying text on the assumption that between the latter half of the second century (p<sup>46</sup>) and the fourth century (λ) the above linguistic considerations may have passed into obscurity. That this was true at a later date is evident from the paraphrastic attempts at smoothing over the grammar in D\* (*εἰς τὸ τεκνῶσαι*) and the Majority text (*ἔτεκεν*).

The translation "plant seed" is an attempt to go beyond the euphemistic "enabled to become a father" (NIV; compare GNB). When

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<sup>22</sup> "So far as Hellenistic (and Classical) usage is concerned *καταβολὴ σπέρματος* can only refer to the sexual function of the male (the verb is *καταβάλλειν* or *καταβάλλεσθαι*); the function of the female in conception is expressed by the term *ὑποδοχή* (*ὑποδέχεσθαι*)." Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, 3rd ed. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 84.

<sup>23</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (3rd ed.) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 672 (Metzger's brackets).

compared with the translation of the phrase καταβολὰς σπερμάτων in Lucian ("to ejaculate semen"<sup>24</sup>), both seem rather tame. "Since he considered" is a causal clause giving the reason Abraham received strength. The statement also functions to fill out πίστει ("by faith"). For Abraham to have faith meant to consider God faithful. "The one who promised worthy of trust" is an echo of 10:23.

The textual variants reflect a difference in spelling which affects the sense. "They were begotten" (ἐγεννηθησαν) is read by  $\kappa$  D<sup>c</sup>  $\Psi$  1739 Majority text; "they came into being" (ἐγενηθησαν) is found in p<sup>46</sup> A D\* K P 33 lat. The latter reading is the more difficult and has the best support.

The third paragraph (verses 13-16) reviews the desire of the elders for the heavenly city, and their consequent life (and death) by faith on the earth. Vanhoye sees these verses as a subsection of paragraph two (verses 8-22) rather than as a separate paragraph. They should, however, be taken as a unit, since the κατὰ πίστιν ("according to faith") in verse 13 interrupts the repetition of πίστει ("by faith"), and the contents of the verses describe the elders as a group rather than focusing on an individual.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lucian, Amores 19, translated by M. D. Macleod, IGL VIII, 180.

<sup>25</sup> Vanhoye, La structure, p. 187.



<sup>13</sup>These all died according to faith,  
 ↑  
 not having received\* the promises;  
 rather  
 they saw them from a distance  
 and  
 welcomed them,  
 acknowledging  
 ↑  
 that they were strangers and exiles on  
 the earth.

Three readings are possible between *μη* and *τας* : (1) *λα-  
 βοντες* p<sup>46</sup> κ<sup>c</sup> D Ψ 1739 Majority text; (2) *προσδεξαμενοι* A;  
 (3) *κομισαμενοι* κ\* I P 33 1241. It should be noted that readings  
 #2 and #3 create a certain euphony with *ασπασαμενοι* (same  
 number of syllables, same ending), as #1 does with *ιδοντες* . On  
 this basis, one might argue that any of the three readings could  
 have arisen from an error in hearing. Considering the fact that  
*λαμβάνω* is a more common verb, this possibility is much more  
 likely with #1. Based on this, and a reluctance to adopt a reading  
 witnessed by only one uncial (albeit a reliable one), #3 is to be  
 preferred.

"According to faith" is a notoriously difficult phrase to  
 translate. "In faith" is the most popular translation (Luther,  
im Glauben [also Michel]), yet the context certainly demands that  
 the reference be to the elders' lives. Circumlocution is very

tempting (NIV, "still living by faith when they died;" Williams, "died victoriously as a result of their faith"). The literal translation above may be interpreted to mean that faith characterized their deaths as it had their lives.<sup>26</sup>

14 For those who say such things make it clear

that they desire a fatherland.

15 Yet, if they had remembered\* the place

they came from,

they always had opportunity to  
return;

16 but in fact they were longing for a  
better place,

that is, a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be desig-  
nated "their God,"

since He made ready for them a city.

The readers are directly linked with the "desire" of the elders by the use of the same verb in 13:14 (object: πόλιν).<sup>27</sup>

For the first main verb in verse 15, three readings are possible: (1) ἐμνημονεύσαν 33 104; (2) μνημονεύουσιν p<sup>46</sup> א\* D\* (supports this reading while differing slightly from it) Ψ 1739\*;

<sup>26</sup> See AGD II.5.b. , p. 407 and cf. the final faith-acts of Jacob and Joseph, vv. 21-22.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Isa. 62:12 LXX: ( )

(3) Ἐμνημονεύου Ἄ<sup>c</sup> A D<sup>c</sup> lat syr Jerome Majority text. The first reading may be dismissed due to scanty attestation. The division of the Alexandrian witnesses makes this decision difficult. Certainly the second reading is the more difficult, since it is much more likely that a scribe finding a present tense would emend it to a past (aorist or imperfect), since the second part of the conditional sentence ("they had") is the imperfect εἶχον. The difficulty of the reading is not insurmountable; it is not impossible that the author's present tense is a continuation of the present tense of verse 14.

"They had remembered" (μνημονεύουσιν) and "they were longing" (ὀρέγονται) would appear to be coordinate with "they make it clear" (ἐμφανίζουσιν). However, because of the μὲν/δέ construction of verses 15-16, the main verbs in these verses have been made subordinate to "they desire" (ἐπιζητοῦσιν) in verse 14 as a parenthetical description of the elders' search for a fatherland.

νῦν is used in a logical ("in fact") rather than a temporal ("now") sense.<sup>28</sup> "Heavenly" is common in Hebrews (3:1; 6:4; 8:5; 9:23; and in 12:22 of the heavenly Jerusalem), used in this context in contrast to "on the earth" (verse 13).

The primary teaching of this section is that the faith of the elders was focused beyond their own deaths and beyond the earth. They sought a heavenly city which could only be found beyond death,

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<sup>28</sup> AGD νῦν 2., pp. 545-46.

and so died "according to faith" (that is, seeing the unseen).

The fact that they did not receive the promises is connected with the confession of their pilgrim status. It was because they did not receive them while on this earth that their faith was truly a matter of "seeing the unseen." Regarding those promises from a distance, their confession was that they did not expect to see the fruition of them during their earthly lives.

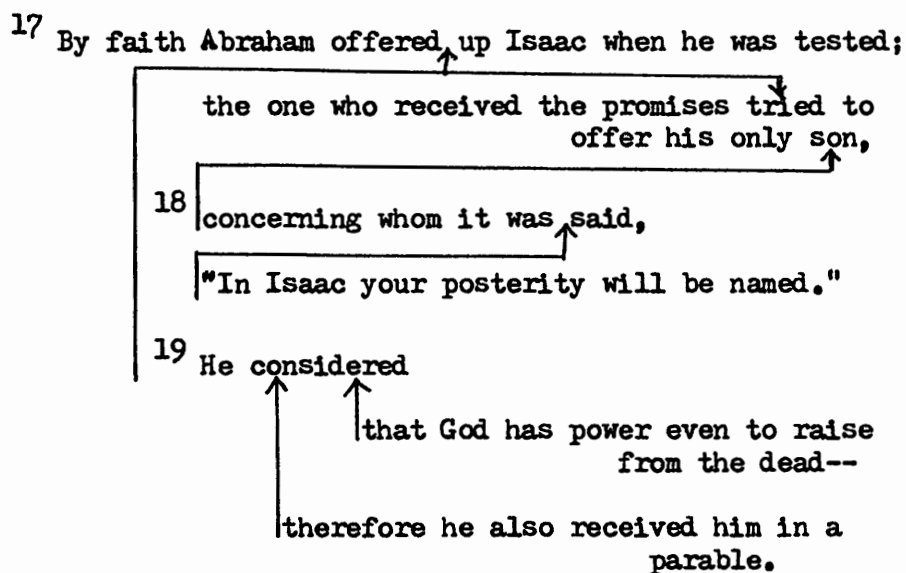
What they sought was a heavenly fatherland, the city which God had prepared for them, called the "heavenly Jerusalem" in 12:22, the "new Jerusalem" by John (Rev. 21:2), and the "Jerusalem from above" by Paul (Gal. 4:26). Their reluctance to return to Mesopotamia was clear evidence that their hope was set on their unseen home. Indeed, their goal was the "city of God" (verse 10), and their divine approval was manifest in God's willingness to be designated by their names.

The pilgrim status of these believers is certainly intended as example and encouragement for the readers. In the midst of suffering which included the loss of material goods, the believers could remember that they have an eternal possession waiting for them (10:32-34). It is in this very context that Hebrews advises the readers of the need of endurance (10:36), and the death of the elders "according to faith" suggests how far that endurance must extend.

The fact that the elders did not receive the promises is not simply an evidence of their other-worldly orientation, but also

involves their place in the working out of salvation-history, as the conclusion of chapter 11 shows.

While paragraph #3 was concerned with the elders' deaths which were characterized by faith, paragraph #4 (verses 17-22) shows the faith of Abraham in the God who raises the dead, and the faith-acts of his descendants while they were dying.



The perfect "offered up" represents an Old Testament event which through the medium of Scripture retains its exemplary force. The imperfect is conative ("tried to offer") since the action was attempted but not completed.<sup>29</sup> The term "his only son" may anticipate the typology referred to in verse 19. A hapax legomenon in

<sup>29</sup> Bl-D #342, pp. 176-77 for perfect; ATR, p. 885 for imperfect; for both cf. AGD προσφέρω 2.a, p. 719.

Hebrews, it occurs three times in Luke (7:12; 8:42; 9:38) with the usual meaning of "only child," and five times in the writings of John (for example, John 3:16), always of Christ. Surprisingly, the term is not used of Isaac in the Septuagint.<sup>30</sup>

"Considering" (λογισάμενος) is taken to be a circumstantial participle subordinate to both verbs προσφέρειν ("to offer up") in verse 17; therefore the arrow has been drawn to the καί connecting the two verbs. "He received" (έκομίσατο) could be taken as a main verb in an independent clause. But ὅθεν ("therefore") indicates the result of Abraham's "considering" (λογισάμενος), which in turn specifies the way in which his faith was exercised.

"Therefore" is a causal conjunction rather than a relative adverb ("from whence," KJV; "from death," NIV). The former is the common usage in Hebrews (2:17; 3:1; 7:25; 8:3; 9:18). "In a parable" is translated variously; in parabola (vg), zum Vorbilde (Luther), לְוַפֵּי לִיָּוֵיִן (HbNT), "figuratively speaking" (RSV, NIV), "a parable of the resurrection" (Moffatt). Moffatt's translation retains the original term "parable" from Greek through Latin. This phrase has been taken since the second century to indicate that Abraham's offering of Isaac pre-figured the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.<sup>31</sup> This view is supported by the use of "his

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Aquila Gen. 22:2; Symmachus Gen. 22:12; in these verses LXX has ἀγαπητός, also used of Christ in the New Testament.

<sup>31</sup> For a concise survey of the patristic evidence see Hughes, Hebrews, pp. 484-86.

only son" (τὸν μονογενῆ) and "to raise from the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν ). It should be noted that the emphasis is on the Resurrection.<sup>32</sup>

20 By faith also Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau  
 ↑  
 regarding future things.

21 By faith Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons,  
 ↑  
 when he was dying  
 and  
 bowed, [leaning] on the top of his  
 staff.

For "his staff" Hebrews follows the Septuagint of Gen. 47:31 (יָרָךְ), cf. HbNT). The Masoretic Text reads "his bed" (יָרָךְ). The Septuagint reading is probably original. Jacob, being an old man, could not fully prostrate himself in worship, so he bowed using his staff for support ("and, bowing on the top of his staff, worshipped God," Weymouth).

22 By faith Joseph brought to mind the Exodus of the  
 ↑  
 sons of Israel.  
 (coming to his end)  
 and  
 gave orders  
 ↑  
 concerning his bones.

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<sup>32</sup> See F. F. Bruce, Hebrews, p. 312.

"The Exodus" is translated by both Moffatt and NIV with a small "e". Possibly it was already a technical term,<sup>33</sup> but elsewhere in the New Testament it is used only of an individual's death (Luke 9:31; 2 Pet. 1:15).

Paragraph #5 covers the periods of the Exodus and the Conquest, omitting the Desert wanderings, which the writer has already characterized as a time of unbelief, not of faith (Heb. 3:7-4:11). The focus moves from Moses (verses 23-28) to the people as a whole (verses 29-30) to the Gentile prostitute (verse 31).

<sup>23</sup> By faith Moses was hidden for three months  
 after his birth | by his parents  
 because they saw that he was  
 a fine child,  
 and  
 (because) they didn't fear the king's edict.

"Was hidden" represents a constative aorist in which a three-month period is viewed as a single event.<sup>34</sup> It is really the faith of Moses' parents that is described ("By faith Moses' parents hid him," NIV).

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ps. 104:38 LXX; Ps. 113:1 LXX; Josephus, Antiquities 5, 72.

<sup>34</sup> D-M, p. 196; ATR, p. 833.



D\* lat vg<sup>ms</sup> insert an entire verse between 23 and 24: ΠΙΣΤΕΙ  
 ΜΕΓΑΣ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΜΩΥΣΗΣ ΑΝΕΛΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΑΙΓΥΠΤΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΝΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΑ-  
 ΠΕΙΝΩΣΙΝ ΤΩΝ ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ ("By faith when Moses grew up he killed  
 the Egyptian, considering the humiliation of his brothers"). This  
 Western addition is drawn either from Stephen's speech in Acts 7,  
 or from the original Exodus account.

24 By faith Moses refused to be called the son of  
 Pharaoh's daughter,  
 when he grew up |  
 25 choosing rather to be mistreated  
 with God's people than to enjoy  
 the temporary pleasure of sin;  
 26 he considered shame for Christ's  
 sake greater wealth  
 than Egypt's treasures,  
 since he kept his attention on the  
 reward.

"Refused" (ἤρνήσατο) functions as a main verb to which the  
 participles ἐλόμενος ("choosing") and ἤγησάμενος ("considered")  
 are subordinate. "When he grew up" is the same phrase used of  
 Moses in Exod. 2:11 (LXX). Combining this with the statement of  
 Acts 7:23 shows that at the time he was about forty years old.

"To be mistreated with" is not only a hapax legomenon in the  
 New Testament, but occurs nowhere earlier and very rarely later,

an indication of the author's literary creativity.<sup>35</sup>

The writer identifies his readers with Moses by using the word "shame" (שׁוֹנֵא , HbNT; "disgrace," NIV) as he had in 10:33, and will again in 13:13 (otherwise only 1 Tim. 3:7; Reom. 15:3 NT). "For Christ's sake" is the only occurrence of the title *Χριστός* in this passage (compare *Ἰησοῦν* , 12:2). The language here may be reminiscent of Ps. 88:51-52 LXX (τοῦ ὀνειδισμοῦ τῶν δούλων σου , 51a; οὐ ὀνειδίσαν τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου , 52b), in which case Hebrews may have in mind a corporate solidarity between the Anointed people of God and the Anointed One who had come. It is also probable that Moses knew the predictions of the coming Messiah (for example, Gen. 3:15; 49:10) and that his identification with God's people was motivated by his hope in the Coming One. Another term used to identify the readers with Moses is "the reward" (שָׂרָפָה , HbNT) used previously in 10:35 (and compare *μισθαποδοτής*, verse 6).

<sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt,

not fearing the king's anger;

for he held out as if he saw the Invisible  
One.

Many exegetes refer the phrase "he left Egypt" to the flight

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. M-M, p. 608; G. W. H. Lampe, ed., A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 1267.

of Moses to Midian. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the expression *μὴ φοβηθεῖς* in this verse with *ἐφοβήθη* in Exod. 2:14 LXX (MT = אַיִן אֵי). It is better to understand this verse as a general summary of the events surrounding the Exodus.<sup>36</sup> The verb "held out" is used of Jewish martyrs in 4 Maccabees.<sup>37</sup> In seeing "the Invisible One" Moses is "an eminent illustration of faith as *ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπόμενων*."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>28</sup> By faith he celebrated the Passover and the sprinkling of blood,  
 ↑  
 so that the destroyer should not touch their firstborn.

The Greek perfect "he celebrated the Passover" is used to show that once Moses had performed the first rite, the Passover became a permanent institution.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Spicq, *Hébreux*, II, 359. It is not necessary to expect the writer to follow strict chronological order--e.g., Abraham dwelt with Isaac and Jacob (v. 9) and received strength to produce offspring (vv. 11-12); the walls of Jericho fell (v. 30) and Rahab received the spies (v. 31).

<sup>37</sup> Wilhelm Mundle, "Patience, Steadfastness, Endurance, *καρτερέω*," in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78), 2, 767.

<sup>38</sup> Dods, *Hebrews*, p. 361.

<sup>39</sup> B1-D #342.4, p. 176.

- 29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea  
 as if on dry land,  
 which the Egyptians, when they tried  
 it, were drowned.
- 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell  
 after being encircled  
 for seven days.
- 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with the  
 disobedient,  
 since she welcomed the spies  
 peaceably.

Whatever rhetorical training the anonymous author of Hebrews may have had, his literary skill is quite apparent in paragraph #6 (verses 32-38). He begins with a rhetorical question, continues with a barrage of short phrases whose rhythm is quite striking, and concludes with a poignant theological evaluation of the courageous elders.

- 32 And what more can I say?  
 For\* time would leave me\* behind  
 if I tell  
 about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David  
 Samuel and the prophets:

The fifth departure from Nestle 26 concerns word order.  $\mu\epsilon$   
 $\mu\epsilon$  is read by p<sup>13</sup> p<sup>46</sup> D<sup>c</sup> I lat Clem Alex Majority text.  $\mu\epsilon$   $\mu\epsilon$

is witnessed by  $\chi$  A D\* 33 ( $\mu\epsilon$  alone, read by  $\Psi$ , may be rejected). Considering the witness of two early papyri, a fifth century Alexandrian manuscript and Clement, Nestle's reading should be rejected.

The expression "time would leave me behind" is a common rhetorical device (compare especially Isocrates 1, 11: ἐπιλίποι δ' αὖ ἡμᾶς ὁ πᾶς χρόνος, IGL I, 8). Of the three pairs of names given in this verse, each is in reverse of the Biblical (probably also chronological) order. Samuel is given after David in order to associate him with the prophets; the order of the judges may be dependent on 1 Sam. (1 Reg.) 12:11 LXX.<sup>40</sup>

- 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms,  
 carried out justice,  
 obtained promises,  
 shut lions' mouths,  
 34 extinguished the power of fire,  
 escaped swords' edges,  
 from weakness were made strong,  
 became mighty in battle,  
 turned aside foreign armies.
- 35 Women received their dead by resurrection;

<sup>40</sup> Bruce, Hebrews. p. 331.

others were tortured,  
 ↑ not accepting release,  
 ↑ that they might obtain a  
 better resurrection.

The *ἵνα* clause ("that they might obtain," and so forth) could be taken as subordinate to the main verb *ἐτυμπανίσθησαν* ("they were tortured"). Instead it is subordinated to the participle *προσδεξάμενοι* ("[not] accepting") as describing the purpose of the refusal of deliverance.

In "by resurrection" the stories of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-23) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35) are clearly in view. The rare verb "were tortured" (*ἰψύθη* = "were beat to pieces," HbNT; distenti sunt, vg; sind zerschlagen, Luther) occurs only here in the New Testament and only once in the Septuagint at 1 Sam. (1 Reg.) 21:14 in the account of David feigning madness by "beating" on the city gates. The noun *τύμπανον* ("rack," RSV) is found in 2 Macc. 6:19, 28. The references from Maccabees suggest that the writer may have had the martyrs of Maccabean times in mind.<sup>41</sup>

(who through faith, etc.)

36 ↑ Still others experienced mockings and lashings,

as well as fetters and prison;

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<sup>41</sup> For a full treatment of the verb and its cognates see E. C. E. Owen, "

," Journal of Theological Studies 30 (1929), 259-66.

(who through faith, etc.)

37 | they were stoned,  
     |                    tested,\*  
     |                    sawn in half;  
     | they died by slaughter with the sword,  
     | they wandered around in sheepskins,  
     |                                    in goatskins;  
     |                    destitute,  
     |                    afflicted,  
     |                    mistreated;  
 38 | of whom the word was not worthy,  
     | wandering in deserts  
     |                    and mountains  
     |                    and caves  
     |                    and holes in the ground.

A confusing textual situation exists here. The reading after *ἐλιθασθησαν* is construed variously by Greek uncial and minuscule manuscripts, versions and Fathers. To simplify five possibilities witnessed by Greek uncials and minuscules are given: (1) *ἐπρησθησαν, ἐπερασθησαν* Ψ (probably) 1923; (2) *ἐπιρασθησαν, ἐπιρασθησαν* D<sup>gr</sup>\*; (3) *ἐπειρασθησαν, ἐπρισθησαν* X P L 33 2495; (4) *ἐπρισθησαν, ἐπειρασθησαν* p<sup>13</sup> (apparently) A K 1739; (5) *ἐπρισθησαν* p<sup>46</sup> 2 327 1241. Reading #1 may be rejected as late; #2, although reasonably early, is clearly corrupt. The remaining three

would seem to depend upon an editor's predilection for one of three early witnesses, p<sup>46</sup>,  $\aleph$  or A. Number three is to be preferred, but not only on the basis of manuscript evidence. The section verses 33-38 manifests a certain euphony of sound and balance of rhythm. If reading #5 is adopted (so Nestle 26), the metrical pattern of the verse is 2/3/2/2/3. If reading #3 or #4 is chosen, then the pattern is 3/3/2/2/3, in which case the rhythm of the first and last units match.<sup>42</sup>

"Sawn in half" (secti sunt, vg; zerhacht, Luther) is another hapax legomenon in the New Testament. It occurs in the Septuagint at Amos 1:3 and in Theodotion Susanna 59 ( $\pi\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\iota\ \sigma\epsilon\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omicron\nu = LXX$   $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\eta\ \sigma\epsilon =$  "saw you in two," RSV). This is the method by which, according to tradition, Isaiah the prophet met his death (Justin Dialogue 120:  $\text{Ἰσαΐου, ὃν πρῖονι ξυλίνῳ ἐπρῖσατε} =$  "Isaiah, whom you sawed with a wooden saw"). "Sheepskins" is the very word used in the Septuagint for the "mantle" which Elijah passed on to Elisha (1 Kings [3 Reg.] 19:13, 19; 2 Kings [4 Reg.] 2:8, 13-15).

By saying "of whom the world was not worthy" ("they were too good for this world," NEB) the writer at once passes a value judgment on both the elders and the "world," used in the hostile sense so often found in John.

Paragraph #7 (verses 39-40), while brief, contains significant

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<sup>42</sup> See Michel, Hebraeerbrieff, p. 419, nn. 6 & 7; Metzger, Textual Commentary, pp. 674-75; Delitzsch, Hebrews, pp. 285-87.



theological teaching. Vanhoye includes these two verses within his fourth paragraph (verses 32-40). However, since the content of the verses focuses on the elders from throughout the chapter, and since (like paragraph three, verses 13-16) it begins with "all these" (οἱ πάντες) and with a phrase distinct from the rhythmic "by faith" (πίστει; here διὰ τῆς πίστεως, "because of this faith"), it should be treated as a separate paragraph.<sup>43</sup>

39 So all these did not receive the promise,  
 although approved  
 because of this faith,  
 40 since God foresaw something better for us,  
 that they should not be brought to  
 completion apart from us.

Having departed from the rhythmic *πίστει* at verse 33 for *διὰ πίστεως*, Hebrews adds the article to the same phrase ("through this faith") to recall to his readers' minds all the great actions connected with faith.

In the middle voice the verb "foresaw" (providente, vg; "since God had foreseen," RSV; "God had planned," NIV) can have the meaning of "provide," but in the context of the historical summary just given, the connotation of divine foresight cannot be ignored.

<sup>43</sup> Vanhoye, La structure, pp. 191-92.

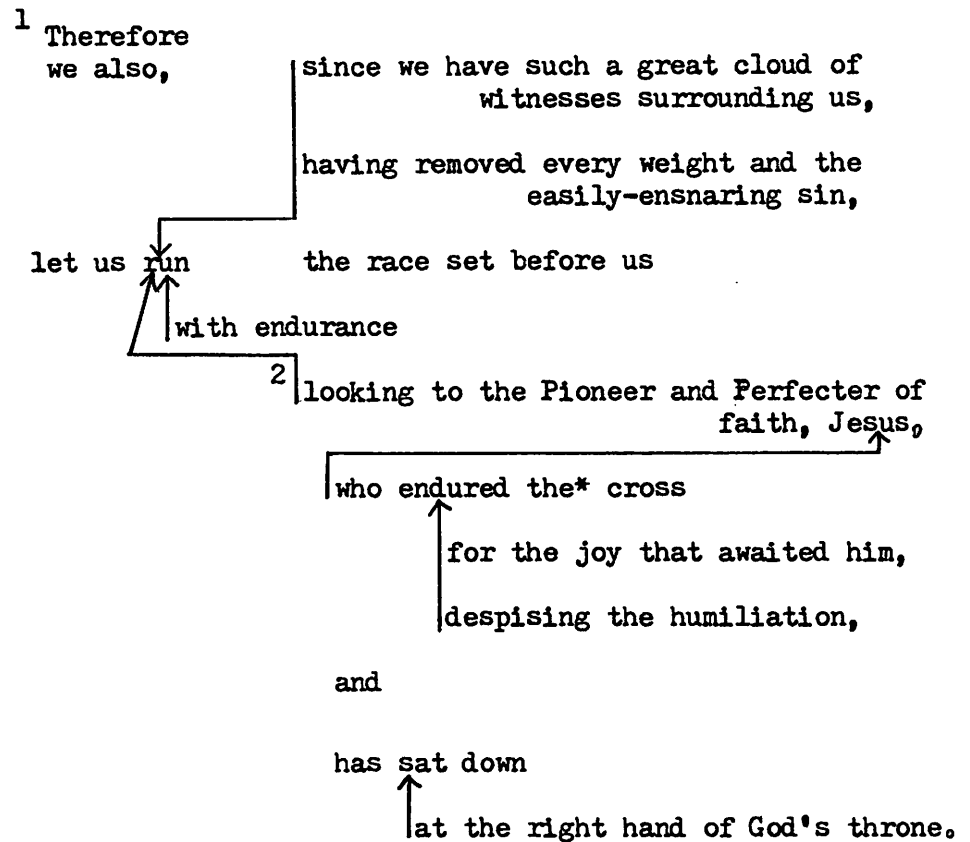
Despite the fact that all the elders were approved through this faith, they did not receive the promise; not because of any defect in their faith (otherwise they would not have been approved), but because of God's plan for the full completion of all believers in the New Age. That plan is founded on the institution of the New Covenant (chapter 8), which involves the work of the great High Priest of the New Covenant (chapters 7, 9, 10). This is the "something better" of which Hebrews speaks.

The great deeds which resulted from the elders' faith were evidence that they "saw the unseen." This seeing of the unseen, however, involved not just trust in the invisible God and the expectation of a heavenly home, but also the anticipation of the "last days" (1:2) and the fulfillment of the promise in the promised redeemer. God's plan for the elders, those pilgrims who could not be at rest until they had migrated from earth to heaven, hinged on His plan for the New Age, the descent of the Son from heaven to earth. So Christ, who appeared at the "consummation of the ages" (9:26), brings all believers to completion through his final act. This is the subject of the last paragraph of the passage.

Paragraph #8 (12:1-2), following on the previous statements, directs the attention of the readers to the race before them and especially to the One on whom faith must be focused.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For an analysis of this paragraph as chiasmic, see Estella B. Horning, "Chiasmus, Creedal Structure and Christology in Hebrews 12:1-2," Biblical Research 23 (1978), 37-48.



Two compound verbs, *περί-κευμαί* and *πρό-κευμαί*, are used in what appears to be a play on words: the witnesses are set around us, the race is set before us and the joy was set before Jesus. While the "witness" concept is that of being approved by God,<sup>45</sup> nonetheless the athletic imagery suggests the elders seated in the grandstands observing the race. "Easily-ensnaring" occurs here first in Greek literature, later only in Church Fathers. Moulton and Milligan give this definition along with "easily-avoided," "admired," and "dangerous."<sup>46</sup> The related noun *περι-*

<sup>45</sup> See the word study on below.

<sup>46</sup> M-M, p. 264.

στραβίς means "disaster" in 2 Macc. 4:16 (RSV) and "miserable state" in P Lond 42<sup>21</sup> (168 B.C.). These latter two meanings, the previous term "weight," and the metaphor of the race support the translation "easily-ensnaring."

The seventh and final departure from Nestle 26 is in reading the article *τον* with *στραυρον*, following p<sup>13</sup> p<sup>46</sup> D\*. Admittedly omitting the article is the harder reading, but the agreement of the two papyri with the added witness of a Western uncial cannot be easily dismissed.

The term *ἀρχηγόν* ("Pioneer," Moffatt, NIV<sup>47</sup>) is found only three other times in the New Testament (Heb. 2:10; Acts 3:15; 5:31). In Acts it may very well have its Septuagint meaning of "Prince" or "Ruler." Hebrews, however, pictures Jesus as the trailblazer leading his band through sufferings to the ultimate goal of glory (compare Heb. 2:10 in context; also *πρόδρομος*, Heb. 6:20).

While this paragraph is an exhortation to run with endurance, the theological thrust is that faith is the means of endurance, and faith means "looking to Jesus." The readers, involved as they are in the struggle of suffering for Jesus, need endurance (10:36) in order to successfully complete their race. The elders, though approved by God and now earnestly observing the race of the present believers, were not brought to completion in their life of faith. Therefore their examples alone are not enough to provide the needed endurance.

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<sup>47</sup> 1973 ed., with marginal reading "Originator;" 1978 ed. retreats to "Author."

On the other hand, it is not simply the example of Jesus in enduring the cross which is the intended focus of the call to look to Him. While Jesus' example is important, the significance of his enduring of the cross is of much greater moment. The preceding chapters have outlined the cross as the sacrifice of the High Priest who offered Himself for sin, thus opening the way into the presence of God and establishing the basis for the full completion of believers.

The fact that looking to Jesus means more than following his example is intimated by the statement that He "has sat down at the right hand of God's throne." This not only implies the resurrection and ascension of Christ, but brings to the readers' minds the image of Jesus as the High Priest in God's presence (4:14-16; 10:19-22). The perfect tense implies that he remains seated, and His seated position indicates that His work of sacrifice is finished (10:11-12).

Jesus is the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, not only in that he leads believers to their ultimate goal, but much more in that he was qualified for his priestly ministry through sufferings (2:10; 5:2) and his sacrifice is the basis of the perfection of believers (5:9; 10:14).<sup>48</sup>

The writer, then, in calling upon the readers to run the race while looking to Jesus, identifies the concept of "seeing the unseen" with the High Priest now in heaven. So then faith, or

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<sup>48</sup> For a fuller development of the concept of perfection, see word study on  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma$  below.

"looking to Jesus," is the key to running the race with endurance.

### Major theological themes in Hebrews

In chapter one seven major theological concepts which occur in Hebrews were examined in order to demonstrate that chapters 10-12 are the climax of the book. Here they will be considered specifically for their contribution to the theology of Hebrews. Their meaning throughout Classical and Hellenistic literature will be taken into account. However, the focus will be on the theological significance of these themes in the Old Testament, the New Testament generally, Hebrews as a whole, and the concluding exhortation (Heb. 10:19-12:29) in particular. The themes, then, in order of occurrence, are: (1) ΠΙΣΤ- ("faith"); (2) ΤΕΛ- ("completion"); (3) ἘΠΑΓΓΕΛ- ("promise"); (4) ΜΕΝ- ("remaining"); (5) ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟΝ ("better"); (6) ΜΑΡΤ- ("witness"); (7) ΚΛΗΡΟ- ("inheritance").

The concept "faith" (ΠΙΣΤ- ) is not only central to Heb. 11:1-12:2 (27 occurrences) and to the book of Hebrews as a whole (41 occurrences), but to the entire scope of Biblical revelation. Therefore it is imperative to grasp the Scriptural meaning of faith in order to rightly understand how Hebrews uses it.

In extra-biblical Greek, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ can mean (a) "confidence, trust;" (b) "trustworthiness;" (c) "guarantee, assurance." The verb ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ means "to trust, to rely on" (with a personal object it can acquire the nuance "to obey").<sup>49</sup> Bultmann points out

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<sup>49</sup> Rudolf Bultmann and Artur Weiser, "πιστεύω, πίστις, πιστός, πιστόν, ἄπιστος, ἀπιστέω, ἀπιστία, ὀλιγόπιστος, ὀλιγοπιστία" in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed.

how the word developed in expressing religious faith: "Whereas in the older Gk. world the idea that there are gods used to be expressed by νομίζειν ["suppose"], πιστεύειν can be used instead at a later period."<sup>50</sup>

While other verbal roots are related to the idea of faith in the Old Testament (for example, תרץ "trust," תפא "seek refuge," תתן "wait," תתן "wait for," תתן "wait"), the concept πιστ- almost exclusively translates the root תאמ .<sup>51</sup> The best examples are Gen. 15:6 (LXX ἐπίστευσεν = תאמִּי MT) and Hab. 2:4 (LXX πίστεύς μου = תאמִּי MT). The verb in the Hiphil stem means "to declare God תאמִּי," "to say Amen to God":

Even in passages where there is no express mention of this the presupposition of faith is always the fact that God is the true author of the relation between God and man. In content the orientation of this use is in detail to the particular aspect which is set in the foreground in this mutual relation. If the reference is to God's requirement, order, or command . . . then faith implies acknowledgement of the requirement and man's obedience. If the divine promise occupies the stage . . . then תאמִּי expresses acknowledgment of the promise and of God's power to fulfill it, and it also denotes the implied worship of God as the almighty Lord.<sup>52</sup>

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Gerhard Kittel, trans. by G. W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964-76), 6, 176-78.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 179, present writer's brackets.

<sup>51</sup> Exclusively so with πίστις; πιστεύω always except Jer. 25:8 = שמו ("hear"); Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books) (Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck-Verlagsanstalt, 1954), II, 1137-38.

<sup>52</sup> Weiser, "πίστις OT;" TDNT 6, 187.

This analysis by Weiser of the Old Testament concept of faith is much more balanced than that of Bultmann. While Weiser states that in certain contexts the root "implies" obedience, Bultmann goes much further by saying, ". . . this element is very much stronger in the 'belief' of the OT, and is often predominant. In relation to God יְדָאֵל can often mean . . . 'to obey.'"<sup>53</sup> Bultmann cites three references (Exod. 4:1, 8-9; Deut. 9:23; 2 Kings 17:14) in which יָדָא is parallel to שָׁמַע ("hear"). Significantly, Weiser does not include this last root among those related to the idea of faith. That an expression is in synonymous parallelism with another establishes a relationship between them, but does not necessarily identify them as exact equivalents.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand, Bultmann is certainly correct in equating "faith" with obedience in intertestamental Judaism:

Faithfulness is also obedience. Hence the Law and commandments are among the objects of faith. In the Rabb. writings to believe God and to obey God are equivalent in meaning. Hand in hand with obedience goes trust. To keep the Law (לִצַּי , LXX ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΙΝ ) is par. to trusting God (בַּטָּח , LXX ΠΕΠΟΙΘΕΝΑΙ ).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Bultmann, "πίστις;" TDNT 6, 197.

<sup>54</sup> That πίστις does not mean "obedience" in Hebrews will be discussed below.

<sup>55</sup> Bultmann, "πίστις," p. 199, quoting Sir. 32:24 (23 Heb.); the transitional status of Sirach between the Old Testament and later Judaism has been noted in ch. 1. above.



This emphasis on faith as obedience is enhanced by the characterization of faith as meritorius in the Mekilta;

And so also you find that our father Abraham inherited both this world and the world beyond only as a reward for the faith [אֱמַנְתָּ אֱלֹהִים] with which he believed, as it is said: "And he believed in the Lord," etc. (Gen. 15:6).

.....  
 What was the cause of our attaining this joy? It was but a reward for the faith [אֱמַנְתָּ אֱלֹהִים] with which our fathers, in this world which is altogether night, believed. . . . And it is written: "But the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4).<sup>56</sup>

The importance of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition for the writers of the New Testament leads to the frequent use of the concept "faith." The general categories of meaning which are continued include: (a) "to believe" (Luke 24:25; Mark 11:31); (b) "to trust" (Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16) and (c) "to hope" (Rom. 4:18). More specifically Christian meanings are: (a) acceptance of the Kerygma (1 Thess. 1:8-9); (b) the content of faith (Rom. 10:9); (c) personal relation to Christ (Rom. 10:14; Gal. 2:20); (d) believing (Acts 20:21); (e) fides quae creditur = "the message" (Gal. 1:23).<sup>57</sup>

In the book of Hebrews, the concept, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ, like so many theological concepts in the book, serves the hortatory purpose of the author. It is closely related to the word of God (4:2, 3) and the

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<sup>56</sup> Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, ed. and trans. Jacob Z. Lauterbach (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933), pp. 253-54; present writer's brackets.

<sup>57</sup> Bultmann, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ," pp. 205-214.

promise of God (6:12; 10:23; 11:11). It is the major focus where the Old Testament history is presented, first with the unbelief of the Desert Generation (3:7-4:11), later with the faith of the elders (chapter 11).

This hortatory use of faith, along with some verbal cues, has misled some into taking πίστις in Hebrews 11 to have a meaning which "fits" with exhortation. First of all, the concept is identified with obedience (ὕπακοή). Considering Bultmann's inclination to make faith mean obedience in the Old Testament, it is not surprising that he finds the same definition here. The statement "By faith . . . Abraham obeyed" (Heb. 11:8) is used as proof that πίστις has "the more or less explicit sense of obedience" here. Additional proof is the parallel between ἀπιστία and ἀπειθεῖν in Heb. 3:18-19.<sup>58</sup> The same identification is made by Eichler: "In Heb. 11:7, just as in Paul, faith is seen as believing and acting on the word of God."<sup>59</sup>

The tendency of Bultmann to overemphasize the implication of obedience in Old Testament faith was seen by contrast to Weiser above. Bultmann has the same problem with parallelism here as he does there. That unbelief and disobedience are used in the same context shows only that they are related, not that they are identical. The term "sin" (ἁμαρτήσασιν) is also used in this context

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>59</sup> Johannes Eichler, "Inheritance, Lot, Portion, κλήρος," in NIDNTT 2, 301.

(3:17), yet Bultmann makes nothing of it, since he is not attempting to identify faith with "righteousness," or the like. It is best to say that unbelief results in disobedience and sin, just as for Abraham faith resulted in obedience. In Hebrews as well as in Paul's writings, faith is an attitude out of which right actions grow.

Some have identified faith with hope (ἐλπίς). A connection could be admitted if hope were understood as an attitude of confident expectation. More often, however, attitude and action are confused:

The concept of faith here is closer to the Pauline concept of hope than the Pauline concept of faith. Here faith is firmness, reliability, and steadfastness. In laying hold of the God who is steadfast, the believer himself is made steadfast.<sup>60</sup>

H. N. Huxhold in this statement seems to be dependent on Erich Graesser, who defends more persuasively and at much greater length the thesis that πίστις in Hebrews means, not ἐλπίς, but ὑπομονή ("endurance, steadfastness"):

Therewith this pistis, the power to persevere, the power to stand fast in all trials, becomes a crucial criterion of believing existence. In Hb it does not signal soteriological-personal relations (πίστις εἰς Χριστόν ["faith in Christ"]). Pistis in Hb is an eminently

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<sup>60</sup> H. N. Huxhold, "Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews," Concordia Theological Monthly 38 (1967), p. 658.

ethical category. It is the ἀρετή appropriate to the ἐπαγγελία. Faith is steadfastness.<sup>61</sup>

Certainly πίστις is associated with ὑπομονή in Heb. 10:32:12:3, as it is by Paul in 2 Thess. 1:4. Again, because the two are identified does not mean they are identical. Arguments have been given in chapter one to demonstrate from a literary standpoint that faith is not the equivalent of endurance, but rather the means of endurance. The real problem here is with a defective theological concept of faith, a conception of faith as a virtue (ἀρετή) or human power. That Graesser conceives of faith in Hebrews in this way is clearly illustrated by his contrast with Paul:

. . . there, therefore, with Paul, generatio fidei . . . whereby faith--when it has first of all been awakened through the Word--is then itself an "eschatological phenomenon," that is, "that which conveys justification to men on the basis of δικαιοσύνη ." Here, with Hb, cooperatio fidei, whereby faith as instrument . . . is brought in by the hearer himself as the means, as the power, with the help of which he puts himself in a wholly settled position and perseveres in it.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Damit wird diese Pistis, die Kraft zum Beharren, die Kraft zum Standhalten in allen Anfechtungen zum entscheidenden Kriterium der gläubigen Existenz. Sie signalisiert im Hb nicht soteriologisch-personale Bezüge (πίστις εἰς Χριστόν). Pistis im Hb ist eine eminent ethische Kategorie. Sie ist der ἐπαγγελία angemessene ἀρετή. Glaube ist Standhaftigkeit. Erich Graesser, Der Glaube im Hebraeerbrief (Marburg: Elwert Verlag, 1965), p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Dort also, bei Paulus, generatio fidei . . . wobei der Glaube--wenn er erst einmal durch das Wort geweckt ist--dann selber ein "eschatologisches Phaenomen" ist, d.h., "der die Gerechtigkeit zum Menschen tragende Grund der δικαιοσύνη ." Hier, bei Hb, cooperatio fidei, wobei der Glaube als Instrument . . . vom Hoerer selbst mit eingebracht wird als das Mittel, als die Kraft,

As a further contrast to Paul, Graesser contends that faith in Hebrews is not faith in Christ: "The specifically Christian ('Christological') faith finds no further development in Hb, neither in the reflective manner of the Apostle Paul, nor in the unreflective manner of the Synoptics."<sup>63</sup>

Now, one need look no further than Heb. 12:2 and the call to "look to Jesus" to conclude that in the passage being considered in this study faith is pre-eminently Christological. The whole "faith cycle" beginning at 10:32 leads up to the climactic identification of faith (the means of endurance) with "seeing the Unseen," that is Jesus Himself. As for the nature of faith throughout Hebrews, it seems absurd in light of the development of the teaching of the High Priestly ministry of Christ, and the strong exhortation to "enter God's presence boldly" on the basis of that ministry (4:14-16; 10:19-25) to say that faith in Hebrews is not Christological. If the phrase *πίστις εἰς Χριστόν* ("faith in Christ") is not used in Hebrews, the idea is certainly implied throughout. Even where faith is referred simply to God (6:1; 11:6), the background is the teaching of chapter 1 that Christ, in contrast to the angels, is God.

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mit deren Hilfe er sich in einen ganz bestimmten Stand setzt und darin durchhaelt. Ibid., p. 66; quoting Juengel a.a.O 43.

<sup>63</sup> Der spezifisch christliche ("Christologische") Glaube findet im Hb keine Fortsetzung, weder in der reflektierten Weise des Apostels Paulus, noch in der unreflektierten der Synoptiker. Ibid., p. 79.

In developing the point that faith is a virtue provided by man, Graesser contrasts this view with that of Paul which connects faith with the Word of God. But in Hebrews also the object of faith is the word of promise. First of all, by contrast, unbelief is the rejection of the word which is heard (4:1-3). Then positively it focuses on the promise (6:12). Therefore, with the personal object (Christ) and the promise in mind, it is best to understand faith in Hebrews (indeed, throughout Scripture as a whole) in the general sense of "trust": "From a purely formal standpoint there is nothing very distinctive in the usage of the NT and early Chr. writings as compared with Gk. usage. As in Gk. . . . ΠΙΣΤΕΒΕΙΝ means "to rely on," "to trust," "to believe."<sup>64</sup>

The connection of this trust with God's Word is summed up aptly by Gerhard Delling who, in another context and almost in passing, speaks of "πίστις", which is firm confidence in the fulfillment of God's promise. . . ."<sup>65</sup>

To repeat the definition given above, faith in Heb. 11:1-12:2 is "an attitude of trust by which the believer sees the unseen and thereby sets his hope on the divine promise."<sup>66</sup> The elders trusted that they would eventually be "brought to completion" and qualified to enter their heavenly fatherland, that is, the presence

<sup>64</sup> Bultmann, "πίστις", p. 203.

<sup>65</sup> Gerhard Delling, "τέλος, τελέω, ἐπιτελέω, συντελέω, συντέλεια, παντελής, τέλειος, τελειότης, τελειώω, τελείωσις, τελειωτής", in TDNT 8, 86.

<sup>66</sup> p. 90.

of God. They therefore anticipated the work of Christ as High Priest which would make that entrance possible for them. They "saw the unseen" both in terms of time (the future event of the cross) and of space (looking to heaven they considered themselves strangers on earth). Inasmuch as they looked to God, they also looked to Jesus who is the eternal God.

The believers to whom Hebrews is addressed live in the New Age, the age of the New Covenant and the fulfillment of the promises. The event of the cross and the current ministry of Christ in intercession are the basis for confident entrance into God's presence in prayer. They live now, however, like the elders once did, on the earthly scene, where there is a great contest, a great race to be run, in order to finally reach the heavenly city. Their situation involves suffering, which calls for endurance on their part. The key to enduring is faith, confident trust in God's promise that "He shall come and not delay" (10:37), looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith to lead them on to their final and complete perfection.

The second most common of the concepts is that of "perfection" (ΤΕΛ-).<sup>67</sup> In extra-biblical usage the verb *τελειόω* has a series of closely related meanings: (a) "to bring completeness, wholeness," "to complete;" (b) "to do fully, to complete," or passive, "to be completed, to reach the highest stage;" (c) "to put into

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<sup>67</sup> For a book-length treatment see Paul Johannes Du Plessis, The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1959).

effect," "to carry out;" (d) "to bring to maturity," or passive, "to ripen."<sup>68</sup>

In Biblical Greek, the Septuagint follows a couple of the above meanings in general, namely "to carry through," "to complete," "to conclude." There is, however, a distinctive Septuagint usage, meaning "to make free from stain":

The phrase *τελειώω τὰς χεῖρας τίνος . . .* is to be understood along the same lines. . . . It is . . . used for the Hbr. "to fill the hands" [יָמַלֵּא כַּף]. . . . That someone's hands are made free from stain, or that he is made free from stain, means finally that the one concerned is "able to practice the cultus," cf. Lv. 21:10.<sup>69</sup>

Outside of Hebrews, the New Testament does not imitate this technical "cultic" use of the verb. The main meanings elsewhere in the New Testament are: (a) "fulfill, carry out" a required course (Acts 20:24; John 5:36; 17:4); (b) "come to completeness, fullness" (John 19:28; Jas. 2:22); (c) a special Johannine usage, "completeness or perfection of love" (1 John 2:5; 4:12; John 17:23).<sup>70</sup>

It is appropriate that Hebrews, with its theme of Jesus as High Priest, follows the cultic implications of the Septuagint. Christ is not only fully qualified for his ministry as priest, but

<sup>68</sup> Delling, "τέλος," p. 80.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81; present writer's brackets.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.



it is through this ministry that He qualifies believers to approach God. This is why the elders of the Old Age were not brought to completion, since their qualification was based on His priestly act which came later. The references which may appear to be without cultic significance (11:40 and 12:23<sup>71</sup>) are therefore crucial to understanding the centrality of Jesus' sacrifice in salvation history. Delling aptly expresses what it means that Jesus is the *τελειωτής* ("perfecter," 12:2):

God has qualified Jesus . . . "to come before him" in priestly action. He has done so by the suffering (2:10) in which Jesus confirmed His obedience, 5:8f. As the One qualified (*τελειωθεῖς*) for priestly ministry before God, as the One eternally qualified (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένος*, 7:28), He is the absolute High-priest. . . . By His high-priestly work . . . before God Christ has once and for all "qualified" those for whom He acts "to come directly before God" (10:14; cf. 7:19) in the heavenly sanctuary as men whose sin is expiated.<sup>72</sup>

The remaining forms of this root can also be understood as involved with the cultic purpose of God in bringing Jesus, and believers through Him, to completion through suffering. With *τέλειος* (5:14) and *τελειότης* (6:1), Hebrews calls upon the readers to move on to "completion, maturity" in their Christian lives and their understanding of Christian doctrine. Since the verb had already been used in the context of suffering (2:10; 5:9), the

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<sup>71</sup> Reiner Schippers, "Goal, Near, Last, End, Complete, *τέλος*" in *NIDNTT* 2, 64.

<sup>72</sup> Delling, " , " p. 83.

implication to be drawn by the readers is that the "practice" (τὴν ἔξιν , 5:14) by which maturity comes will involve suffering.

Cultic significance is in the forefront with the use of the term *τελείωσις* (7:11). Maturity, completion, qualification to approach God did not come with the Aaronic order of the Levitical priesthood. Rather the Melchizedekian order of Jesus was required in order for this state to be reached.

The saving work of Christ is directly related to his work of eternal intercession in 7:25, where the phrase *εἰς τὸ παντελές* occurs, encompassing both the temporal aspect of salvation as well as its scope. It is indeed as an eternal priest, in contrast to the impermanent priests of the Old Covenant, that Jesus is able to save both "forever" and "to the fullest extent."

The term *ἐπικτελέω* relates directly to the sacred tent. In 8:5 it is used of the "finishing" of its construction, in 9:6 of the "performing" of the priestly functions within it. Both of these references to the earthly tent imply the contrast Hebrews develops between it and the heavenly tent, the scene of Jesus' superior priesthood. In fact, the term *τελειότερας* is used to point out how "much more superior" the heavenly tent is.

In quoting from Jer. 38 (31 MT):31, Hebrews declares that the Lord will "carry out" (*συντελέσω* , 8:8; LXX = *διαθήσομαι*, "institute") the New Covenant which had been promised. This implies the connection between this covenant and the priesthood by which Jesus perfects believers, a connection which is specifically made in 8:6.

The overall theological character of the root  $\tau\epsilon\lambda$  in Hebrews consists in its stress on the results of Jesus' suffering. As the High Priest who suffers and sacrifices Himself, he is thereby qualified to represent believers before God. By his intercession for them, he opens the way for their perfection through suffering. In 11:1-12:2 in particular, the elders did not come to completion (11:40) because Jesus' sacrifice had not yet been offered as the basis for their qualification to approach God. Believers of the New Age, however, with the groundwork already laid, are regarded as already complete (as are the elders since the New Age has dawned). Facing suffering calls for endurance, and that endurance is accomplished by faith, that is, by looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, Jesus (12:2), the one who led the way through suffering and who qualifies His people to come before God.

The concept "promise" ( $\epsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda$ ) is unique for two reasons. First, as a theological idea it originated with the Bible; the gods of the pagan world did not make promises. Secondly, the verbal root itself is very rare in the Septuagint; while promise is a basic Old Testament concept, yet this particular root is almost non-existent in Old Testament Greek.

In extra-biblical Greek, the root has many meanings: (a) "indicate," "declare;" (b) "order," of a public decree; (c) as a legal technical term, "accusation, judgment, charge;" (d) "declare an achievement," "profess," "specialize;" (e) a technical term for voluntary payment, donation or subscription; (f) "declare" a

festival; (g) "offer to do something," "promise, vow."<sup>73</sup> "In all these examples there is a reference to man's promises to a god, but never ἑπαγγελία θεοῦ . . . . There is only one known example of the promise of a god. . . ."<sup>74</sup>

There are seventeen occurrences of this root in the Septuagint of which only four have a Hebrew equivalent: (1) Ps. 55:8 (56:9 MT) =  $\eta\tau\epsilon\beta\alpha$  ("book") (2) Amos 9:6 =  $\eta\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha$  ("vault"); (3) Esther 4:7 ἑπαγγελία =  $\eta\psi\eta\epsilon$  ("exact sum"); ἑπαγγέλλω =  $\eta\tau\alpha$  ("he said"). It is this last Hebrew verb which is most instructive in explaining the lack of this concept in the Septuagint. In Esther 4:7, the promise is made by Haman; the Septuagint translators took what he "said" to be a promise. The same is true of the divine promise throughout the Old Testament. When God "says" something, it can be taken as promised. A good example of this is Gen. 15:5: "Then He (the LORD) brought him (Abraham) outside and said, 'Look at the sky and count the stars--if you can count them!' So, He said ( $\eta\tau\alpha$ ) MT = LXX εἶπεν ) to him, "Thus your seed will be.'" In the Old Testament, then, the divine word is the divine promise.

The New Testament in some instances follows the secular meaning of extra-biblical Greek: (a) "profess," 1 Tim. 2:10; 4:8; 6:21; (b) a promise of money, Mark 14:11.<sup>75</sup> More often, though, the New

<sup>73</sup> Julius Schniewind and Gerhard Friedrich, "ἑπαγγέλλω, ἑπαγγελία, ἐπάγγελμα, προεπαγγέλλομαι" in TDNT 2, 576-78.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 578-79; cf. n. 23 for example from the "Delic Sarapis Aretalogy."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 579.

Testament develops the Old Testament idea of promise with this term. The verb refers to the promise to Abraham (Acts 7:5; compare Romans 4, Galatians 3) as well as the eschatological promise (Jas. 1:12; 2:5; 1 John 2:25). The noun is used by Paul to bring these two concepts together. The recipients of the promise are Abraham and his seed, and the content of the promise is Messianic salvation.<sup>76</sup> In addition, Luke uses the word (except Acts 23:21) of the promise of God, sometimes with, sometimes without the addition of *θεοῦ*. Finally, Peter explains that the delay in the Parousia has not cancelled the promise (2 Pet. 3:4, 9).<sup>77</sup>

In Hebrews also the promise is associated with the promise made to Abraham (6:12-20) and yet takes on the status of an eschatological hope yet to be realized (10:36). This is because of the "other-worldly" nature of the promised inheritance (as developed, for example, in 11:13-16). The elders had to welcome the promises "from a distance" because the basis on their reception, the High Priestly work of Christ, was not yet complete. The believers of the New Age, on the other hand, have possession of the promise in the sense that Christ's sacrifice is complete, yet in their earthly pilgrimage they are absent from the promised heavenly fatherland. They therefore have need of endurance in suffering in order to receive the promise, which the elders by now have received (12:22-23).

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<sup>76</sup> I.e., κληρονομία ("inheritance"), ζωή ("life"), δικαιοσύνη ("righteousness"), πνεῦμα ("spirit"), υιοθεσία ("adoption").

<sup>77</sup> Schniewind-Friedrich, pp. 581-85.

Julius Schniewind and Gerhard Friedrich describe the situation of the readers of Hebrews in relation to the promise:

The final consummation is still ahead (Hb. 10:36). It will take place soon (Hb. 10:25, 37), for we are already living in the ἔσχατον (Hb. 1:2), in the *συντέτεια* [sic, should be *συντέλεια*] (Hb. 9:26). Christians are in the tension between what is already and what is not yet (Hb. 6:5). . . . God's will to accomplish His promises is unalterable. With the absolute reliability of an oath He has guaranteed the fulfillment of the promise. This should strengthen the faith and patience of Christians as it once encouraged Abraham, especially as the fulfillment of the promise has already begun for them (Hb. 6:12ff . . . Hb. 10:36).<sup>78</sup>

Within 11:1-12:2, the concept ἔπαγγελ- stresses two major theological points. First of all, by the repetition of the phrase πιστὸς ὁ ἐπαγγελόμενος ("He who promised is trustworthy," 10:23; 11:11) the purpose of God to carry out the promise is established. Secondly, the contradiction of "received, but did not receive" regarding the elders demonstrates the crucial nature of Christ's sacrifice as the basis for the fulfillment of God's promises.

The verbal concept "remain" (μέν-) underlies two important theological themes in Hebrews: (1) the permanent as over against the temporary in God's plan; (2) endurance in suffering. The verb μένω in extra-biblical Greek means (a) "remain in place, tarry" (opposite of "go away"); (b) "stand against opposition, hold out"

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 585.

(like ὑπομένω in the New Testament); (c) "remain," "stay still" (opposite of "be moved," "change"--used of God in Philo); (d) "last," especially "remain in legal force;" (e) "expect someone."<sup>79</sup>

In the Septuagint the verb means (a) "stand," "last," "remain," "endure" (= ΤΘΥ); (b) "stand up," "take place," "be lasting," "be in force" (= ΤΘΙ); (c) "remain sitting," "dwell" (= ΤΘΨ); (d) "delay" (= ΤΘΠ); (e) "wait" (= ΤΘΙ).<sup>80</sup> The New Testament uses μένω of (1) the immutability of God and divine things (Rom. 9:11; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25); (2) the abiding in contrast to the transitory (1 Cor. 13:13; 2 Cor. 3:11). There is also a special use of the expression μένω ἐν (1 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:14) and a characteristic Johannine use both of the latter phrase and of the verb μένω alone.<sup>81</sup>

This verb in Hebrews contrasts the temporary with the permanent beginning in chapter 7 with the contrast of Melchizedek and his priesthood with the Levitical order (verses 2, 23, 24). Thus the ministry of Christ has an eternal significance. His New Covenant is the eternal covenant (13:20), making the first temporary. Evidence of this is seen in the inability of the subjects of the Mosaic covenant to "stay with" it (8:9). That believers have an

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<sup>79</sup> F. Hauck, "μένω, ἐμ-, παρα-, περι-, προσμένω, μονή, ὑπομένω, ὑπομονή." in TDNT 4, 574-75.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 575.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 575-76.

eternal possession is proven by the fact that the readers were able to take the robbery of their earthly goods with joy (10:34). After all, they awaited a kingdom which cannot be shaken (12:27), a city which does not remain "here" (13:14).

Of greater importance for Heb. 11:1-12:2 is the compound *ὑπομένειν/ὑπομονή*, which occurs only in the final exhortation. The meanings are numerous in Greek literature generally. The verb signifies: (a) "stay behind," "stand still," "stay alive;" (b) "expect," "await, wait for;" (c) "stay," "wait for hostile attacks," "stand firm," "endure;" (d) "endure," "bear," "suffer;" (e) "stay or persevere with something." The noun means (a) "holding out," "standing fast," "endurance," "steadfastness," especially of enduring evils; (b) "expectation," "waiting."

The Greeks regarded *ὑπομονή* as a virtue roughly equivalent to "courage." The Septuagint reflects the Old Testament approach which considered endurance not as a manly virtue, but rather an inclination to trust God's promise; "While the Greek moralist censured the linking of *ὑπομονή* with hope as an inadmissible weakening, OT *ὑπομονή* issues almost wholly in hope."<sup>82</sup> The peculiar Septuagint expression *ὑπομενοντες τὸν κύριον* ("waiting on the Lord," for example, Ps. 36 [37 MT]:9) does not occur in the New Testament. However, the New Testament concept of enduring trials of this present life (1 Cor. 13:7) implies it and "apparently the centrality of faith and the prominence given to *ἐλπίς* ["hope"]

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 584.



as primary Christian virtues leave no place for the OT formula."<sup>83</sup>  
 This seems more likely when faith and hope occur in the same context with endurance (1 Cor. 13:13; Tit. 2:2).

The linking of faith with endurance is especially noteworthy in Hebrews, where faith is seen as the means of endurance. The readers, who have already endured suffering (10:32), still have need of endurance for the race ahead (10:36; 12:1, 7). Their attention therefore is directed toward Jesus, who in carrying out his High Priestly sacrifice by enduring the cross (12:2, 3) is the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith.

The concept "better" (κρείττον) is crucial to the theology of Hebrews--it occurs more than twice as often here (13 times) as in the rest of the New Testament (6 times). Originally a comparative of κράτος, it is used in extra-biblical Greek to mean: (1) "stronger, mightier; having the upper hand, superior;" (2) "better," "greater" (of gods or men), "beyond," "having control over, master of," "more excellent."<sup>84</sup>

In the Septuagint this word occurs 58 times (quite often in Proverbs and Sirach), of which Hebrew equivalents exist for 32. Most of these occurrences represent the expression ἄλλο . . . ἢ ( "better . . . than," for example, Prov. 21:9, 19). This means that κρείττον is almost always a predicate adjective. This

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 585; present writer's brackets.

<sup>84</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, 9th ed., ed. Sir Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 993.

"better than" pattern is followed in the New Testament generally, though most often with verbs (for example, 1 Cor. 7:9).

In Hebrews *ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟΝ* is used primarily as an adjective in the attributive position ("better hope, better covenant," and so forth). The author uses this word to develop first of all the superiority of Christ (1:4; 7:7), then of the better things which have to do with salvation (6:9). By the time the "something better for us" is mentioned (11:40), on account of which the elders could not come to full completion, the readers have already heard of the "better hope" (7:19), "better covenant" (7:22; 8:6), "better promises" (8:6), "better sacrifices" (9:23), "better possession" (10:34), "better fatherland" (11:14, 16) and "better resurrection" (11:35). All these things are direct benefits of the climactic High Priestly work of Christ at the cross.

In extra-biblical Greek, the root "witness" (*μαρτ-*) carries two basic meanings: (1) a witness to facts in the legal sphere; (2) witness to facts generally, and also to truths or views: ". . . the proclamation of views or truths of which the speaker is convinced. It thus relates to things which by their very nature cannot be submitted to empirical investigation."<sup>85</sup>

The Septuagint has the same basic legal meaning of "the witness before the judgment" in several senses: (a) witness for the

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<sup>85</sup> H. Strathmann, "*μάρτυς, μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, ἐπιμαρτυρέω, συμμαρτυρέω, συνεπιμαρτυρέω, καταμαρτυρέω, μαρτύρομαι, διαμαρτύρομαι, προμαρτύρομαι, ψευδομαρτυς, ψευδομαρτυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρία*" in *TDNT* 4, 478.

prosecution (Num. 5:13); (b) false witness (Deut. 19:16); (c) witness to an agreement (Ruth 4:9, 10); (d) eye- or ear-witness (Lev. 5:1); (e) Yahweh as witness (Gen. 31:44). In addition, Isaiah 43 and 44 develop the distinctive idea of Israel as witness for Yahweh.<sup>86</sup>

In the New Testament generally, the noun *μάρτυς* means: (a) a witness to facts at a trial (Mark 14:63); (b) a combination of both a historical 'eyewitness' and an evangelistic confession (Luke 24:48 and Acts generally); (c) a confessing witness who is not an eyewitness (Acts 22:14; another characteristically Lukan usage); (d) one who witnesses to Christ as a participant in his sufferings (1 Pet. 5:1); (e) as a distinctive Johannine term in Revelation "the term is reserved for those who prove the final seriousness of their witness by suffering death." (for example, Rev. 2:13; 11:3).<sup>87</sup>

The verb *μαρτυρέω* in the New Testament signifies: (a) a human declaration of facts (Rom. 10:2); (b) a good report (Acts 6:3); (c) the witness of God, the Spirit or Scripture (Acts 10:43; 13:22); (d) religious witness (Acts 23:11); (e) confession of the Passion (1 Tim. 6:13); (f) a distinctive Johannine usage where the witness is to Jesus, "the nature and significance of His person." (for example, John 1:15)<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 483-86.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 495.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 496-99.

Sense (c) of the verb is predominant in Hebrews, "the witness of God, the Spirit or Scripture." For instance, where in chapter two a couple of unusual compounds are found, it is God who "added his witness (by way of confirmation)" (*συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος*, 2:4) to the apostolic preaching, and the declaration of Scripture "emphatically affirms" (*διεμαρτύρατο*, 2:6) the point being made.

*μαρτ-* is employed in this way throughout Hebrews, but the "divine passive" of chapter 11 gives a unique connotation to *μάρτυς* in 12:1:

The distinctive thing here is, of course, that this *νέφος μαρτύρων* consists of those who according to c. 11 have received witness (acknowledgement) from God because of their faith. . . . As such, they bear witness by the very fact of their existence to the authenticity of faith. It thus seems that the factual witness is also implicitly a confessing witness.<sup>89</sup>

The theological import of *μαρτ-* in 11:1-12:2, then, is that God's approval comes by faith, that is, by looking to Jesus. As the elders looked forward to that sacrifice at the cross which would ultimately qualify them to enter God's presence, they lived by faith. Now that Jesus has offered that final sacrifice, believers run the race by looking to Him, realizing they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who are approved by God and testify to the necessity of faith as the means of running with endurance.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

The concept "inheritance" (κληρο-) is derived from the verb κλάω, "to break," indicating the breaking up and distributing of an inheritance.<sup>90</sup> In extra-biblical Greek, the noun κληρονόμος means "heir," either by law or by birth. συκληρονόμος always indicates "fellow-heir" in the literal sense. κληρονομία means "inheritance" or "possession." The verb κληρονομέω may signify "to inherit something" or "to be the heir of someone."<sup>91</sup>

In the Septuagint, where the root most often represents the Hebrew יָרַשׁ, κληρονομέω means to "inherit something" (Gen. 15:3-5), "give to possess" (Num. 34:17) or "hold in possession" (1 Chron. 28:8). The noun κληρονομία, as in extra-biblical Greek, means "inheritance" (Gen. 31:14) or "possession" (Micah 2:2). The major Old Testament concept is of the possession of the land promised to the fathers.<sup>92</sup>

In the New Testament the meanings are mostly the same, although they are often applied to spiritual rather than material possessions. κληρονομία can be "inheritance" (Mark 12:7; Gal. 3:18), "possession (of the land)" (Acts 7:5) or "eternal inheritance" (Acts 20:32). κατακληρονομέω means "to give in possession" (Acts 13:9), κληρονομέω "to inherit" (Gal. 4:30; Matt. 5:5) and συκληρονομος "he who receives, or will receive, something along

<sup>90</sup> Eichler, "κλήρος," p. 296.

<sup>91</sup> Werner Foerster and Johannes Herrmann, "κλήρος, κληρώ, προσκληρώ, ὀλόκληρος, ὀλοκληρία, κληρονόμος, συκληρονόμος, κληρονομέω, κατακληρονομέω, κληρονομία" in TDNT 3, 768.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 774-77.

with another" (1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 3:6). Finally, κληρονόμος as used in Mark 12:7 and Rom. 8:17 illustrates a theological emphasis peculiar to the New Testament: "A firm link is established between son-ship and inheritance such as we hardly ever find in the Old Testament and later Judaism, and this runs through the whole of the New Testament."<sup>93</sup>

This emphasis on sonship is also followed in Hebrews. After identifying believers with Jesus (1:4, 14), and specifying that their inheritance is salvation, he then develops the concept of sonship relative to Jesus as the Pioneer of salvation (2:10-14). Believers, then, are those who receive "the promise of an eternal inheritance" (9:15). In chapter 11, it is the elders who are "heirs" (verses 7, 8, 9). It is significant that the inheritance of "righteousness based on faith" precedes the inheritance of the land, since ultimately it is the former which "qualifies" them to stand before God. This fact, together with the longing of the elders for the heavenly city (11:13-16) shows that the inheritance they "saw from a distance" was that unseen place, the presence of God. It is that place to which the readers "have come" (12:22-24), yet they are still pursuing it as they run their earthly race looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith (12:1-2).

The theological argument of Heb. 11:1-12:2 then is set within the hortatory context of the book as follows: the readers, while tempted to desert the New Covenant community for the Old Covenant

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp. 781-82.

(10:38-39; 8:13), are commended for their past endurance of suffering (10:32-34), warned against throwing away their confidence (10:35), and told that they need endurance (10:36) in order to lay hold of the promised inheritance, the better things laid up for them, including their final approval by God and entrance into his presence in the heavenly city. They are then given an overview of great episodes in the lives of the elders, who were approved by God and endured by faith. Their attention is then turned to the focus of faith, Jesus, who endured the greatest and most significant suffering of all, the cross. The explanation of Jesus' status as Pioneer and Perfecter of faith and the conclusion that he has now sat down at God's right hand is followed by the sober reminder that they may face the prospect of death in following their Leader (12:3-4), but that even so suffering is evidence of the Father's loving hand of discipline (12:5-8).

Finally, to put the theological argument of this passage into a few words: the readers need endurance to run the race and bear suffering. The elders endured by faith. Jesus is the focus of faith. Therefore the readers can run the race with endurance by looking to Jesus--faith is the means of endurance.

CONCLUSION  
HOW THE LITERARY FORM OF HEBREWS 11  
AFFECTS THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The discussion of literary form and theological argument in relation to the same passage presupposes a connection between the two. The purpose of this conclusion will be to demonstrate how the literary form of Heb. 11:1-12:2 supports and illuminates the theological argument of the passage. In chapter one of this dissertation the literary form of the passage was established as that of an encomium. In chapter two it was shown that the theological argument is that faith is the means of endurance. In conclusion it will be argued that the literary elements in the passage support this theology by (1) portraying faith as the means of endurance and (2) making Jesus the object of faith.

The first of these two points is developed primarily within the genealogy of the encomium (11:4-38) by means of historical summary and catchword. The repetition of "by faith" emphasizes the means of endurance. The use of selectivity (an encomiastic convention) within the historical summary allows the writer to demonstrate the nature of endurance.

Endurance has been described as "standing fast in trials, steadfastness." It is in the context of the trials already endured by the New Covenant community that Hebrews asserts, "You



have need of endurance" (10:36; compare 10:32-34). After tying endurance together with faith in 10:37-39 and briefly discussing the nature of faith in 11:1-3, the author begins the process of showing that the elders endured suffering by faith.

Abel's death (verse 4) shows his persecution at the hands of his brother because of his approval by God; through his faith he still speaks to those who are persecuted. Noah through his faith condemned the world (*κόσμος*, verse 7). This "world" is the hostile band of those who oppose God and His people.

Endurance for Abraham meant not only suffering the hostility of those who dwelt in the land promised to him (*ὡς ἄλλοτρίαν*, verse 9) but even the testing of God (verse 17). Joseph's prediction of the Exodus (verse 22) implies the suffering that preceded it.

Moses is perhaps the most obvious example of enduring suffering. His parents did not fear the king's edict (verse 23); he did not fear the king's anger (verse 27). He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (verse 24). He chose to suffer together with God's people (verse 25) and valued shame for Christ's sake (verse 26).

The endurance of God's people is vindicated by the triumph of God's judgment over the adversaries. The destroyer did not touch the firstborn of His people (verse 28). The Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea (verse 29). The walls of Jericho fell (verse 30) and the disobedient were destroyed (verse 31).

The passage about the Judges, Samuel, David and the Prophets (verses 32-38) is filled with the hostility of the world and the triumphs of faith. Military encounters give evidence of the world's opposition to men of faith and of their victory through faith ("conquered kingdoms," verse 33; "escaped swords' edges . . . turned aside foreign armies," verse 34). From verse 35b ("others were tortured") through verse 38 nearly every phrase depicts the suffering and persecution of the faithful. The summary statement "of whom the world (κόσμος) was not worthy" recalls the language used of the wicked ante-diluvian world near the beginning of the historical summary.

The examples selected for inclusion within the genealogy also anticipate the identification of Jesus as the object of faith. The definition of faith given above was "an attitude of trust by which the believer sees the unseen and thereby sets his hope on the divine promise." The two aspects of this definition which emphasize the understanding of Jesus as the object of faith are "seeing the unseen" and "the divine promise."

First of all Enoch, who by faith lived a life pleasing to God, was given the privilege of being directly transferred into the realm of the unseen world (verse 5). Noah was warned about things not yet seen (verse 7), and his approval by faith illustrates the fact that the unseen involves not just the heavenly dimension, but future time as well.

This future orientation was also an integral part of Abraham's

faith. He departed for a place he was about to receive and did not realize where he was going (verse 8). He was the one who received the promise, while the restoration of his son was a token of the future Resurrection (verses 17-19).

Isaac and Joseph in their dying acts gave evidence of their faith as a matter of "seeing the unseen (future)." Isaac gave a blessing regarding future things (verse 20), and Joseph predicted the future Exodus (verse 22).

Moses, as mentioned in chapter two, is a clear example of one whose faith involved both "looking ahead" and "looking beyond." He "kept his attention on (literally, "looked away to," ἀπέβλεπεν, verse 26) the reward" and he "saw the Invisible One" (verse 27). The warning concerning the coming "destroyer" could be heeded only by faith (verse 28).

The anticipation that God's promise for the future of Jericho would be realized motivated God's people to encircle the city (verse 30) and Rahab to receive the spies (verse 31). Later generations received God's promises (verse 33) and anticipated the Resurrection (verse 35).

The illustrations in the genealogy also support three major encomiastic conventions used by Hebrews to buttress the theological argument. First of all, Hebrews uses the elders as foils for Jesus. He does this by linking the ideas of suffering and looking to the unseen to Jesus in 12:1-2. In addition the concepts of resurrection and sacrifice in chapter 11 anticipate the reference

to Jesus in chapter 12.<sup>1</sup> By thus using the elders as foils for Jesus, Hebrews shows that faith does not mean looking to the elders or imitating their example. While their example of living by faith is worthy of imitation, yet faith is primarily "looking to Jesus" (12:2).

This point is strengthened by the use of amplification by comparison. After developing the positive image of the elders and how they were approved by faith, Hebrews surprises the reader by claiming that the elders were not brought to perfection. This prepares the way for the presentation of Jesus as the One who perfects, and therefore the true object of faith.

Thirdly, the encomium of Heb. 11:1-12:2 concludes with a command to emulate. The actual command is to run the race with endurance. Attached to it, however, is a participial phrase describing the manner of running with endurance, "Let us run the race with endurance by looking to Jesus" (12:1-2). This clarifies the point that faith is the means of endurance by defining faith as looking to the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith. This definition does not differ substantially from the characterization of faith in chapter 11 as "seeing the unseen," since the High Priestly ministry of Jesus before the throne of God takes place in the unseen world.

How does this use of the encomium form to stress the two-fold theological argument fit in with the rest of the book of Hebrews? Both aspects of endurance in trials and of faith as seeing the

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter one, pp. 66-67.

unseen (particularly as it focuses on Jesus) are evident throughout the book. The warning to heed the message which comes through the Son and avoid drifting away (2:1-4) is an implicit call to endurance through faith. The development of the concept of the maturing of the Pioneer of Salvation through suffering (2:10-18) shows very specifically that it is Jesus who is both Leader (verse 10) and Helper (verse 18) to those who are being led to glory. Indeed, he is the merciful and faithful High Priest (verse 17). A specific call to consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest, is given in 3:1.

From 3:7 to 4:11 the unbelief of the Desert Generation is held up as the example to avoid. The numerous expressions for faith and unbelief,<sup>2</sup> coupled with the terms for hearing the voice, or word, of God,<sup>3</sup> show that the endurance needed to avoid giving in to temptation and suffering comes by faith, and that faith is a matter of hearing the revelation proceeding from the unseen presence of God. This point is reinforced by the description of the word of God (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) as living and active (4:12), a word which comes from the unseen God who sees all things (4:13).

Whereas the section on the Desert Generation was preceded by the call to consider Jesus (3:1), it is followed by a call to

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<sup>2</sup> ἀπιστία, 3:12, 19; ἀποστήναι, 3:12; ἁμαρτία, 3:13; ἁμαρτανῶ, 3:17; ἀπειθεία, 3:6, 11; ἀπειθέω, 3:18; ὑπερέω, 4:1; πίστις, 4:2; πιστεύω, 4:3.

<sup>3</sup> ἀκούω, 3:7, 15, 16; 4:2, 7; ἀκοή, 4:2; φωνή, 3:7, 15; 4:7; λόγος, 4:2.

approach God boldly (4:14-16), emphasizing again the role of Jesus as the High Priest. The unseen presence of God, the throne of grace, is thus established as the goal of the believer's faith in preparation for the development of the particulars concerning the High Priestly ministry of Christ.

The initial step in developing the doctrine of Christ's High Priesthood is the comparison with Aaron (5:1-10). Even within this section there is an encouragement to endure suffering. It comes in the form of a description of the sufferings of Christ (verse 7) coupled with two conclusions: (1) that He learned obedience through suffering (verse 8) and (2) that it was that very suffering that qualified Him as the source of salvation (verse 9).

Endurance is the focus also in the warning against immaturity (5:11-6:12). It is the goal of maturity or completion which Hebrews desires for his readers (5:14; 6:1, 11), that is, to become inheritors of the promise through faith (6:12). The danger related to endurance is that they will become lazy in their hearing of God's word (5:11; 6:12) and "fall aside" (6:6). The focus on the promise is in fact a focus on the High Priestly work of Jesus (6:19-20).

The nature of faith as "seeing the unseen" is stressed in the mysterious nature of the Melchizedekian priesthood (7:1-3) and in the permanent nature of that priesthood (7:22-28) as over against the Levitical priesthood.

Christ's High Priesthood is based on the New Covenant, which

by virtue of being "new" (καινήν , 8:13) is also permanent (13:20). The scene of Christ's sacrifice is the heavenly Tent, which is pitched by God, not man (8:2, 5; 9:11, 23); indeed, it is the very presence of God (9:24). These facts place Christ's High Priestly actions, the basis of Christian faith, in the unseen world. This is reinforced by the fact that the earthly Law was but a shadow of the unseen realities (10:1). The ability of Christ's sacrifice to effect a permanent forgiveness (10:17-18) and a permanent perfection for God's people (10:14) makes it the sure center on which faith focuses.

After explicating the nature of Jesus' eternal High Priesthood as the focus of Christian faith and salvation, the author repeats the call to approach God boldly (10:19-22). The rest of chapter 10 is a call to endurance, with warnings against desertion of the New Covenant community (verse 25) and therefore of the New Covenant itself (verses 26-31). This is followed by the call to endure sufferings by faith (verses 32-39).

What has been implicit up to this point in the book, that faith involves "seeing the unseen," is made explicit by the encomium in 11:1-12:2. The prooemium (11:1-3) sets down the definition of faith and prepares the way for the illustration of endurance by faith in the genealogy (11:4-38). The epilogue (11:39-12:2) reveals that the New Covenant community stands in the privileged position of being perfected through Christ's sacrifice, something the elders did not attain in their life of endurance by faith.

Nonetheless, the readers stand in the same position of confronting "the world" and running the race on earth. It is with endurance the race must be run, and that endurance comes only by "looking to Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith."

The encomium, which appears to be the climax of the book is followed by an encouraging reminder that suffering is the Lord's discipline of His children (12:3-13), and that running the race with endurance entails seeking sanctification (12:14-17; chapter 13) and hearing and heeding God's voice (12:18-29). This is the trail which Jesus blazed and the path that must be followed to the heavenly Zion.

The writer to the Hebrews, then, uses the encomium form to direct the attention, or rather the faith, of his readers to Jesus. He does this by selecting for examples of faith in his genealogy those elders whose lives demonstrate that faith is the means of endurance, and that the essence of faith is focusing on the unseen realities promised by God. These realities include the heavenly city, ultimate perfection and rest in God's presence. Jesus' work as the great High Priest who offered himself as a sacrifice for sin is the basis for the reception of these promised realities.

The encomium ultimately serves a hortatory purpose. The readers, in the midst of suffering and persecution and tempted to turn back to the Old Covenant and its priesthood and rituals, are in need of endurance to withstand the pressure. The use of encomium to direct attention to Jesus, His priesthood and leadership,



reinforces the underlying point that faith is the means of endurance.

The writer, as a good pastor, knows that his people need more than information if they are to endure suffering by faith, they need comfort and encouragement. Therefore he presents them with one of the most moving literary works in the Bible--an encomium on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, the Great High Priest.

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