

A New Proposal of Hebrews' Outline

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Abstract

Identifying and understanding the outline of a book in the Scripture is important to understand a text. One book in the Scripture that receives attention from scholars in terms of inquiring about the outline or the structure of its book is the Book of Hebrews. This is due to the awareness among scholars in regard to the complexity of this book's outline or its structure. Because of its complexity, scholars have proposed various outlines of this book. In fact, by careful study, a new approach of even the idea of the outline of Hebrews could be brought to the surface. Therefore, using some aspects of the literary devices proposed by Alberth Vanhoye, this paper task was to analyze the way how the author composes the book of Hebrews and provide a new outline of this book. In turn, this new outline provided help for interpreters to exegete this book.

Keywords: Hebrews, outline, complexity, new approach, literary devices.

INTRODUCTION

Biblical scholars are in agreement that identifying the outline of a book in the Scripture is important to understand a text.⁵⁴ One outline of the Scripture that receives attention among scholars is the book of Hebrews. Regarding the effort to understand the message of the Book of Hebrews, Albert Vanhoye correctly notes,

In order to understand the message correctly that the author of Hebrews has left us, it is not enough to read his sentences one after the other. One must also and above all, figure out the composition of the work as a whole. In fact, each part receives its precise meaning only when it is situated in its place in the whole. Otherwise, a secondary remark runs the risk of being considered something essential while a central point passes unrecognized. An error

⁵⁴A valuable statement found in the UBS Greek NT reads as follows: "Advances in discourse studies indicate that the meaning of the texts is related not only to segmentation at the clause and sentence level, but also to the larger units of paragraphs and section." Barbara Aland et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), 40.

with regard to the literary structure is never without consequences on the interpretation of the thought.⁵⁵

The outline of Hebrews is complex. David Allen correctly states, “In the same way that background for Hebrews has engendered diverse proposals, the outline and structure of the epistle are no different.”⁵⁶ Because of its complexity, scholars have constructed many outlines and proposals in order to discern the structure of this book.⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, there is no consensus among scholars regarding the outline of Hebrews.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Vanhoye, *Structure and Message*, 18. See also Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 59; David Allan Black, “Problem of the Literary Structure,” *Grace Theological Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 164.

⁵⁶David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), 87. See also, Henry Wansbrough, *Introducing the New Testament* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015), 318. Steve K. Stanley states that uncovering the structure of Hebrews is “a long and arduous process.” Steve K. Stanley, “The Structure of Hebrews from Three Perspectives,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45, no. 2 (1994): 246, accessed September 21, 2017, https://legacy.tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/Library/TynBull_1994_45_2_02_Stanley_StructureOfHebrews.pdf. See also Black, “Problem of the Literary Structure,” 164.

⁵⁷Allen, *Hebrews*, 87. Lightfoot correctly provides a reminder regarding the endeavor that scholars do in analyzing the literary structure of Hebrews. According to him, the emphasis of the NT writer is to convey the message of Christ and of salvation. They speak a practical need in their letter addressed to a certain church. Regardless of the sophisticated and perfect Greek style found in books of the NT, like the Book of Hebrews, all the authors write “not as ‘literary’ men to an elite readership but as men communicating Christian truths to a wider audience of fellow Christians.” Lightfoot Neil R. *Jesus Christ Today: A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976) 42.

⁵⁸George H. Guthrie, “The Structure of Hebrews: Text Linguistic Analysis” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), 35, 39, accessed September 28, 2017, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/303944916?accountid=42729>. Cynthia Westfall, for example, identifies at least seven approaches which scholars have proposed in regard to the structure of Hebrews. Cynthia Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship Between Form and Meaning* (London, UK: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 1. Guthrie categorizes the works on Hebrews’ structure into five major approaches: structural agnosticism, rhetorical analysis, thematic analysis, literary analysis, and linguistic analysis. Ibid, 39. Westfall has proposed a structure of Hebrews by utilizing a discourse analysis approach based on the Systemic-Functional Linguistic of M. A. K. Halliday. See the detail in Cynthia Westfall, “The Structure of Hebrews: The Relationship Between Form and Meaning,” paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 19, 2006, p. 4, accessed December 18, 2016, <https://hebrews.unibas.ch/documents/2006Westfall.pdf>. Moreover, Westfall divides the works on the structure of Hebrews into several areas: content analysis, rhetorical analysis, literary criticism, discourse analysis, combination of several approaches, and agnostic position. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis*, 1. Allen categorizes the approaches based on the period of time from the traditional approaches to the modern proposals. For a detailed discussion, see Allen, *Hebrews*, 87-93. According to Vanhoye, modern exegetes in Germany divide this book into three parts. The three parts are the word of God (Heb 1:1-4:3), the priesthood of Christ (4:14-10:31), and the Christian life (10:32-12:29). See Vanhoye, “Hebrews.” *The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by William R. Farmer (Quezon City, Philippines: Clarentian, 2001), 1765. In his article, David M. Heath enlists nine categories of structures and compositions of the Book of Hebrews. He also presents a detailed information of each category—the proponents and the year of their work. In fact, Heath

Despite the complexity of the outline of this book, Vanhoye asserts an optimistic opinion as follows: “But it is not difficult, and a careful study of it allows us into the very heart of the message of Hebrews.”⁵⁹ Therefore, having analyzed the Book of Hebrews, Vanhoye concludes that it has six literary devices: (a) a subject of the announcement;⁶⁰ (b) inclusion; (c) hook words; (d) characteristic terms; (e) genre alteration; and (f) symmetrical arrangements.⁶¹ Vanhoye divides Hebrews into five major sections that are surrounded by an introduction and a conclusion.⁶²

METHODOLOGY

The paper is an exegesis in nature. However, the main aspect of exegesis used in this paper is the literary analysis which is mainly based on Vanhoye’s three literary devices found in the Book of Hebrews, namely, (a) subject of the announcement; (b) hook words; (c) genre alteration. The focus of this analysis is to track the author’s argument and see how he composes this book in the two main parts, the teaching and exhortation part,⁶³ and in turn, construct a new outline of this book

Analysis of Hebrews’ Composition

To begin, this study argues that the author of Hebrews has composed this book in four parts. The first part is Heb 1:1-3, which acts as the introduction of the book. The second part is Heb 1:4-10:18. In this part, the author provides some arguments leading the readers to understand the character of Christ and His role as a high priest. Some exhortations are found in this part. The third part is the final exhortations (Heb 10:19-13:19). Finally, Heb 13:20-25 is a closing remark indicating the end of the book.

acknowledges that with all these efforts, a consensus has not been reached among scholars. See his list in detail, David M. Heath, “Chiastic Structure in Hebrews: With a Focus on 1:7-14 and 12:26-29,” *Neotestamentica* 46, no. 1 (2012): 61-62, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/5537268/Chiastic_Structures_in_Hebrews_With_a_Focus_on_1_7-14_and_12_26-29?auto=download. See also William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary 47a (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), lxxxviii.

⁵⁹Vanhoye, *Structure and Message*, 18.

⁶⁰Vanhoye calls it as “proposition.” Vanhoye, *Structure and Message*, 20.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²For details of his structure, see Vanhoye, “Hebrews,” 1767.

⁶³Scholars generally agree that the author of Hebrews has composed this book into two main parts, namely, teaching or doctrinal part and exhortation.

Introductory part

The letter begins with an exordium (1:1-4), a general introduction to the whole argument of the book.⁶⁴ In this part, the author directly points out that the general themes of the letter are “God Spoke” and “Son.”⁶⁵ This introduction provides the main theme of the letter or the topic sentence for the whole Book of Hebrews. First, the author points out that God spoke through prophets in many different ways in the past (1:1). In the last days, according to him, God speaks through His Son (1:2).⁶⁶ Second, the author emphasizes the significant role of the Son, which is God’s mouthpiece to men (1:3). In this part, the author briefly describes Christ’s “pre-existence..., and his role in creation.”⁶⁷ In general, Lightfoot correctly denotes that at the beginning of this book, the author presents “a kind of foretaste of all that is to follow.”⁶⁸ In other words, every discussion on this book is rooted in this introduction. However, the latter discussion on the Son is more obvious compared to the first one.⁶⁹ In v. 4, the author demonstrates that Jesus is better than angels. This part serves as a bridge to enter into the arguments that the author makes in regard to the Son. The evidence of this connection is seen by the appearance of the hook word “ἀγγέλων” both in v. 4 and v. 5, respectively.

⁶⁴Most scholars agree on the division of this section; however, in labeling, they are different. DeSilva, for example, composes this section under a general section (1:1-4); however, he still considers 1:1-4 as the thesis of the book. See David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrews.”* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 72. See also Vanhoye, “Hebrews,” 1767; G. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 39; Fred B. Craddock, “The Letter to the Hebrews,” *The New/ Interpreter’s Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 12:18; Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 15 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 58. Contrast, Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 3; Franz, J. Schierse, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New Testament for Spiritual Reading 21 (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1981), xxiii.

⁶⁵The introduction of the Book of Hebrews lacks the credibility sign of the author as the one who wrote this book. DeSilva correctly points out that the author directly introduces “the leading idea that will be developed” in later discussion. See DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 85.

⁶⁶This contrast, however, is a technique of speech to catch the listener’s attention that, according to Craig Keener, is “a central feature of much ancient argumentation.” Craig S. Keener, *Hebrews*, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 638.

⁶⁷Nicholas J. Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews: Plurality and Singularity in the Letter to the Hebrews, Its Ancient Context, and the Early Church*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 388 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 160.

⁶⁸See also Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today*, 53.

⁶⁹The indication that the ‘Son’ is the emphasis of the book found in these first four verses. For the first topic, the author occupies only v. 1 and half of v. 2 to discuss God who speaks in the past and these last days. The rest of the sentences in this introduction are “devoted to the Son.” See Vanhoye, “Hebrews,” 1772.

Argument of the Son and Preliminary Exhortations

After the introduction, the author starts his teaching by providing two arguments regarding the nature of Christ. First, the author renders the divinity of Christ. The emphasis of his point is that He is better than angels (1:5-14). In this part, the author makes a comparison between the Son and angels. According to the author, angels have only created being, whereas, regarding the Son, God has anointed him with “the oil of gladness above Thy companions.” (v. 9). Secondly, the author points out the incarnation of Christ (2:5-16). According to the author, Christ is made in human likeness, or “he is made for a little while lower than the angels” (2:9).⁷⁰ The author shortly alludes that the purpose of Jesus being made as a human is that He might provide help for human beings as his brothers (vv. 16-18). Between these discussions, the author inserts an exhortation regarding the importance of taking heed to what the believers have heard regarding their salvation (2:1-4).

The author alters the initial discussion on the nature of Christ to the introduction of Christ as a high priest by using the term *high priest* in Heb 2:17-18. This is the first time the author introduces Jesus as the high priest. Starting from this point, the author continually focuses on the third argument in relation to the elaboration of Christ as the high priest, which culminates in Heb 8;1-10:18.

To start the discussion on Christ’s high priesthood, the author begins the argument with the discussion on the two characters of Jesus, namely, merciful (ἐλεήμων) and faithful (πιστός, v. 17). The author flips over these two points by elaborating first Christ’s faithfulness in 3:1-6 and His mercifulness in 4:14-16. An exhortation about how to be faithful by learning from the experience of Israel’s disobedience is found in the middle of these two units (3:7-4:13).

Interestingly, the author conceptually carries forward the discussion on “merciful” in 5:1-4 and, at the same time, uses this discussion as a basis for the next argument, namely, the argument of the designation of Christ as the high priest. According to the author, Jesus can be a high priest because He once lived among men.⁷¹ In fact, Aaron is also a high priest coming from among men. However, the difference between Jesus and Aaron’s priesthood is that Jesus is not a descendant of Aaron, but He is “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (5:6). The discussion on the designation of Christ ends in 5:10. In Heb 5:11-6:20, the author warns the readers regarding their faith maturity and the importance of imitating the faith and the patience of those who inherit the promise (5:11-6:18). This exhortation “prepares listeners for the next major section.”⁷²

The word ἀρχιερεὺς, “high priest” in 6:20 obviously acts as a conceptual hook word tying the discussion on Jesus as the high priest from 2:17-18 to all the sequential chapters (Heb 7-9). In other

⁷⁰The author of Hebrews provides an explanation to the condition of Jesus being made a little lower than angels by saying that Jesus will experience suffering and “might taste death for everyone” (Heb 2:9).

⁷¹The author utilizes several terms indicating that Jesus experienced living among men. Those terms are κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων, “loud cries and tears”; εὐλαβείας, “piety”; and ἔμαθεν ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν, “He learned obedience from the things which he suffered.”

⁷²Koester, *Hebrews*, 306.

words, this word connects the discussion of Christ's high priesthood found previously before 6:20 and anticipates for its wider discussion found in chaps. 7-9. Therefore, the phrase "according to the order of Melchizedek" in 6:20 has become sentence stress to shift the discussion from the exhortation (5:11-6:20) to the exposition of Christ as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek in chap. 7.⁷³

The discussion in chap. 7 starts directly with an elaboration about Melchizedek and continues with the nature of Christ as a high priest according to Melchizedek's order.⁷⁴ In the first part of this chapter, the author starts the discussion by elaborating on Melchizedek's background (7:1-10). Then, he continues the discussion by making a comparison between Jesus's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood (7:11-28).

At the end of chap. 7, the author places emphasis on the role of Christ as the high priest (7:25-28). This emphasis serves, first, as the summary of the arguments related to the designation of Christ as the high priest built from the beginning of the Book of Hebrews. Second, it provides anticipation for the discussion on the ministry of this high priest, which is elaborated later in the central section of the Book of Hebrews (8:1-10:18).⁷⁵

Central section of the book

The introduction of Jesus as the high priest and the elaboration on the prerequisite for His ministry end in Heb 7:28.⁷⁶ The particle δέ, which appears at the beginning part of chapter 8 obviously confirms this development.⁷⁷ This development is also confirmed by the Greek word κεφάλαιον (the main point). Lane demonstrates that after 7:28, "a new stage in the argument"⁷⁸ begins. He correctly observes that the previous sections found in 5:6-10, 6:20, and 7:11-28 centralize "Jesus's appointment as high priest and his vocational qualification for the exercise of a

⁷³This pattern is a common usage in Hebrews. The author employs this literary feature to make the alteration of his argument flow smoothly.

⁷⁴According to Koester, in the previous verse (6:20), the author paraphrases the record found in Ps 110:4 to inform that Jesus's high priesthood is according to Melchizedek's order. In Heb 7, the author refers to Gen 14:17-20 as the only reference on the life of Melchizedek in the OT. See Koester, *Hebrews*, 338.

⁷⁵The word ἀρχιερεύς in this passage serves as a keyword that makes the discussion in the previous unit (2:17-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 6:19, 20; 7:11-24) and the unit following this section (8-10) cohesive. Cf. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis*, 194.

⁷⁶Similarly, Westfall points out that the discussion on Christ's high priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek has been concluded in 7:28. *Ibid.*, 188.

⁷⁷The particle δέ can function as a transitional conjunction denoting "the change to a new topic of discussion." Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 674. He also asserts that, compared to the particle οὖν, δέ is the most common particle that alters a new discussion in a discourse. *Ibid.*

⁷⁸Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 202.

fully effective ministry.”⁷⁹ In other words, the three previous arguments act as the preparatory parts to lead the readers to the main point of the book. In this part, the author elaborates on the ministry of Jesus as the high priest in the heavenly tabernacle, the covenant, and the effectiveness of Jesus’s sacrifice for the purification of human sins in the following section (8:1-10:18).

Final Exhortations

Having outlined “the basis of Christ’s heavenly priesthood”⁸⁰ in Heb 8:1-10:18, the author alters the discussion in Heb 10:19 from teaching to exhortation. This alteration is signed by the appearance of the inferential conjunction οὖν, which indicates that the author is drawing a logical conclusion from what he has rendered earlier.⁸¹ As James Thompson points out, “The transition signaled by ‘having, therefore’ in 10:19 clearly marks the shift from exposition to exhortation as a major transition in the argument.”⁸² Moreover, it is clear that Heb 10:19-25 acts as “an introduction to the exhortation material running from here to the end of the book,”⁸³ and it connects “the truth concerning Christ and the implication of that truth for the Christian life.”⁸⁴

Next, the author develops the thought by first warning the audience about the danger of living continually in sin and its consequences (10:26-31). In order that they might maintain their faith and not “throw away their confidence, which has a great reward” (10:36), the author reminds the readers about the historical event of their journey of faith and the judgment day to come (10:32-38). The author then intensifies the exhortation by urging the readers not to “shrink back to the

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Gordon, *Hebrews*, 136.

⁸¹Owen points out “in the word ‘therefore’ there is a note of inference from the preceding discourse, declaring it to be the ground of the present exhortation.” Owen, *Hebrews*, 196. One function of οὖν given by Joseph H. Thayer is “to show what ought to be done by reason of what has been said.” Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), s.v. “οὖν.”

⁸²James Thompson, *Hebrews*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 200.

⁸³G. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 347.

⁸⁴Ibid. Most scholars agree that the author has composed this section in such a unique way to recall the previous theme he rendered before by utilizing similar words, phrases, and thoughts. See for example, Craddock, “The Letter to the Hebrews,” 12:120; James Moffat, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 141; Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982), 186. Lightfoot states that from this point (10:19-25), the author “will seek to drive home the practical implication of his formal argument, that his readers may grasp the sense of responsibility and privilege that goes with the new covenant.” See Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today*, 188.

destruction” (10:39).⁸⁵ As indicated in the text, the author places the Greek word πίστις both in 10:39 (exhortation part) and 11:1⁸⁶ (exposition part) to indicate that these two sections are connected. It is interesting to see how the author develops the arguments of his exposition in Heb 10 and 11. From the beginning of the book up to chap. 10, the author always starts with the exposition then gives exhortations in between. The given exhortations are usually based on the teaching he renders previously. On the contrary, after the author gives an exhortation in Heb 10:20-39, he renders long teaching in chap. 11 to reinforce the exhortation. The appearance of the hook word πίστις and the theme of Heb 10:32-39 corroborate the fact that Heb 11 is a reinforcement teaching which the author intends to convey to the readers so that they might be faithful despite any trials.⁸⁷

Apart from the exposition of faith in chap. 11, the remaining part of the book contains a continuation of exhortations to the believers.⁸⁸ However, the alteration from “historical recital (11:1-40) to pastoral exhortation”⁸⁹ in chap. 12 is not directly denoted by the appearance of a hook word at the beginning of chap. 12.⁹⁰ Rather, as indicated in the text, the presence of the particle

⁸⁵DeSilva rightly points out that “the author reinforces his exhortation to preserve in trust and resist ‘shrinking back’ . . . with an appeal to OT Scripture.” DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 367. The intended verses are Hab 2:3-4 and Isa 26:20. Moreover, DeSilva denotes that the author “combines two different texts without giving any indication to the hearers of this blending.” Ibid.

⁸⁶The author, in fact, has alluded the subject of faith in Heb 11 earlier. He states “that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith [πίστις] and patience inherit the promise [ἐπαγγελία]. For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself” (6:12-13).

⁸⁷Lane correctly gives some insight to enlighten the readers about the message of Heb 10:32-39 and its connection with Heb 11 by providing the historical setting of the believers at the time this letter was written and sent. See the broader discussion in Lane, *Call to a Commitment*, 144-145.

⁸⁸As indicated in the structure scholars have composed, they do not agree with the division of the last exhortation in the Book of Hebrews. See Gareth L. Cockerill, *The Epistle to Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 80, 81; Koester, *Hebrews*, 85; Vanhoye, “Hebrews,” 1767; G. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 40; George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, Anchor Bible 36 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 2; Allan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews*. Sacra Pagina 13. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 21; Stanley, “The Structure of Hebrews,” 245-271. Craig R. Koester, “Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future,” in *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Kevin B. McCrudden (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 115.

⁸⁹Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 403.

⁹⁰Hebrews 11 and 12, however, are still bound with the hook words found in these two chapters. The word πίστις which permeates chap. 11 is also found in 12:3. The other words that the author utilizes indicating that these two chapters are connected are τελειώω, “to make perfect” in 11:40 and τελειωτής, “perfecter” in 12:2.

τογαροῦν, “therefore”⁹¹ in 12:1, shows that the author is drawing a “logical transition”⁹² between these two chapters (11 and 12).⁹³ However, the appearance of the Greek words ὑπομονή and πίστις at the end of chap. 10 and at the beginning of chap. 12 proves that the exhortation in chap. 12 is the continuation of the previous exhortation, which ends in 10:39.⁹⁴ Moffat clearly points out these points as he states, “The writer now returns to the duty of ὑπομονή (*endurance*) as the immediate exercise of πίστις (*faith*, 10:36).”⁹⁵ In chap. 12 and 13, the author exhorts the readers to be faithful and also to do some practical ways in life in the right ways. He ends his exhortation by asking the readers to pray for him and his companions so that they would have an honorable life and also that he might meet the readers soon (13:18, 19).

Closing

The sign of the end of the letter is signified by the appearance of the last benediction. In this part, the author alludes to the main theme of his letter by mentioning several keywords, namely, God, blood, covenant, and Jesus Christ (vv. 20, 21). After the benediction, the author accompanies this closing with a final urge to call the readers to bear his exhortations in this letter and to be aware of Timothy’s presence among them (vv. 22, 23). Eventually, the letter ends with final greetings (24, 25).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, based on the analysis of the parts and sections above, it can be concluded that the author has composed this book in such a unique way that he wants to lead the readers to understand the role of the Son and His ministry in salvation. While the author builds his argument to prove

⁹¹In the NT, this particle is found only in 1 Thess 4:8 and Heb 12:1. However, according to G. Guthrie, this particle is commonly found in other literatures. See G. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 396. Lane points out that this is an “intensified conjunction” that can be translated also as “consequently” and functions as an inferential particle that coordinates two sections. See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*. Word Biblical Commentary 47b (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 407.

⁹²G. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 396.

⁹³In contrast, DeSilva prefers to see Heb 12:1-3 as a part of Heb 11. According to him, the pattern the author of Hebrews presents is “encomia and example lists” and they “frequently end with a brief exhortation and are incomplete when considered apart from the parenetic purpose to which the author puts the example.” DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 377. Therefore, according to him, Heb 12:1-3 is the end part of Heb 11:1-40. Ibid. However, based on the evidence in the text, it seems that the author returns to his “old style,” giving an exhortation after an exposition. Therefore, Heb 11:1-40 should be considered as a parenthetical discourse which acts as a reinforcement of the exhortation that the author conveys in regard to the faithfulness of the believers.

⁹⁴Thompson correctly denotes, “This recollection of heroes is sandwiched between the challenges to endure through suffering in 10:32-39 and 12:1-11 because the heroes of faith faced circumstances similar to those that now confront the community.” Thompson, James Thompson, *Hebrews* (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 228.

⁹⁵Moffat, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 192. Emphasis supplied.

that Jesus, the Son of God, is the One who makes the propitiation for sins, he inserts some exhortations containing warnings and encouragements to the readers in regard to their salvation and their maturity in the faith. The transition from the exposition of the high priest to the exhortation is clearly indicated by the appearance of some sentence stresses found at the end of each section.⁹⁶ After establishing the foundation of the argument of the Son, the author dedicates Heb 8:1-10:18 for the ultimate discussion on Jesus as the high priest and what He has achieved for the salvation of the believers. Having finished with the elaboration of Christ's high priesthood argument, the author exhorts the readers to be faithful and to live a practical Christian life with the insertion of reinforcement of faith in Heb 11.⁹⁷ Finally, this book ends with a personal greeting from the author. Therefore, below is a proposal for the outline of Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1-3: Introduction to the Topic of Hebrews

1:1 God speaks in these last days through His Son

1:2 The eminent attribute of the Son

1:3-4 The main point of the book—the glorified Son Jesus Christ who has purified the sins and His ministry on high

Hebrews 1:5-10:18: The Argument of the Son and Preliminary Exhortations

First argument: The divine existence of Christ

1:5-14 He is better than angels—the pre-existence of Christ

1:14-2:4 Exhortation about salvation

Second argument: The incarnation of Jesus

1:5-2:16 He is made in human likeness and its effects for the salvation of human beings

Third argument: Jesus as the high priest

2:17-18 Two attributes of Jesus

3:1-4:12 Jesus's attributes as a faithful apostle who leads the believers is emphasized

3:2-6 The comparison of Jesus and Moses's apostleship

3:7-4:13 Exhortation: Warning about the danger of disobedience and its consequences

4:14-5:3 Jesus as a merciful high priest on the throne

⁹⁶The author utilizes some sentence stresses in Hebrews to indicate transitions. For instance, Heb 1:4: "Having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they" (from the introduction to the first exposition); 1:13: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation" (from an exposition to an exhortation); 2:5: "For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking" (from an exhortation to an exposition); 2:17-18: "That he might become a merciful and faithful high priest" (from an exhortation to an exposition); and 4:14: "Since then we have a great high priest" (from an exhortation to an exposition). See other examples in Heb 5:1, 11; 6:19, 20; 8:1, 6.

⁹⁷In line with this thought, Koester correctly denotes the relation between the exhortation and the teaching found in Hebrews when he states, "The main argument and the transitional sections function somewhat differently, but work together toward the same end, which is that the listeners remain loyal to Christ and the Christian community." Koester, *Hebrews*, 84.

- 5:4-6:20 The designation of Jesus as the high priest
- 5:4-10 Jesus is the high priest designated by God
 - 5:11-6:18 Exhortation about the maturity of the faith of the believers and the importance of imitating the faith and the patience of those who inherit the promise
- 6:19-20 Introduction to the main discussion on Jesus as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek
- 7:1-28 The exposition of Jesus as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek
 - 7:1-10 The exposition of Melchizedek
 - 7:11-28 Jesus is appointed as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek and the comparison with the earthly priests' system

Central section of the book

8:1-10:28 The eminence of Jesus's ministry as a high priest in the heavenly tabernacle and its effectiveness for the propitiation of human sin

Hebrews 10:19-13:19: Final Exhortations

- 10:19-25 Transition to the final exhortation
- 10:26-39 Final exhortations
- 11:1-40 Reinforcement for the believers' faithfulness
- 12-13:19 Final exhortations continue

Hebrews 13:20-25: Closing

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