

April 2016

The Argument of Hebrews

Austen Haney

Liberty University, anhaney@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/kabod>

 Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citations

MLA:

Haney, Austen "The Argument of Hebrews," *The Kabod* 3. 1 (2016) Article 2.
Liberty University Digital Commons. Web. [xx Month xxxx].

APA:

Haney, Austen (2016) "The Argument of Hebrews" *The Kabod* 3(1 (2016)), Article 2. Retrieved from
<http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/kabod/vol3/iss1/2>

Turabian:

Haney, Austen "The Argument of Hebrews" *The Kabod* 3 , no. 1 2016 (2016) Accessed [Month x, xxxx]. [Liberty University Digital Commons](#).

The Argument of Hebrews

A Paper

Presented to Dr. Michael J. Smith

Liberty University

Lynchburg, VA

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Course

BIBL 210 – 002

By

Austen Haney

April 21, 2016

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS	1
PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.....	5
OUTLINE OF HEBREWS	6
DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARGUMENT OF HEBREWS	8
SUMMARY	14
BIBLIOGRAPHY	15

Introductory Matters

Hebrews is a book like no other. Its author is unknown, its date is uncertain, its structure is unfamiliar, and the location of its recipients is undocumented. Nonetheless, it is undeniably one of the richest tours de force ever penned by flesh and Spirit. Its target audience was not just a small group of Messianic Jews who were struggling with faith; it's a message for every Christian that wants to know why to believe in a God they cannot see. It explained to Jewish thinkers and priests how Christ's sacrifice took away their need to sacrifice. To people who view angels, or prophets, or heroes of the faith on the same level as Christ, the author makes sure that they recognize Christ's overwhelming superiority. To every Christian who has ever tried to live the Christian life and has been tempted to quit because it is too hard, this book offers the blueprint for endurance.

Authorship (Who?)

After Hebrews was added to the canon by the council of Hippo in AD 393, scholars became increasingly eager to pin authorship on an apostle so that the book would meet the standard entry requirements of the canon.¹ Since that search began, many theories have circulated, but none of them have been convincing enough to be uniformly accepted. In light of the uncertainty, most scholars have found it satisfactory to leave the answer to original authorship unknown, while still agreeing that the book is part of the canon.

Internal evidence. To be included in the canon, a book must have been: 1) written by an apostle or someone who had direct connection to an apostle, 2) recognized by the church as being consistent with the rest of the Christian faith, and 3) accepted and widely used by Christian

1. Roy Sano, *Outside the Gate: A Study of the Letter to the Hebrews*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014,) 8.

churches.² For years, scholars have struggled to establish an author for the book, even sometimes going as far as to make up artificial reasons why the book would have been written anonymously.³ Most commonly perhaps, Hebrews has been suggested to be an epistle written by Paul, but since the Reformation, that view has been seen as highly unlikely.⁴ In Hebrews 2:3 the writer indicates that he did not hear the gospel directly from Jesus but from those who first heard it. As far as canonicity is concerned, the author's connection to an apostle meets the requirements, but for Pauline authorship the verse seems to go directly against Paul's claim in Galatians that he did not receive his message from man but through a revelation of Jesus Christ.⁵

The grammar of Hebrews is also a significant factor when considering authorship. As scholars frequently point out, Hebrews is a very eloquently written book. In his commentary, William Lane notes that "the language of Hebrews constitutes the finest Greek in the New Testament, far superior to the Pauline standard both in vocabulary and sentence building."⁶ It is likely that the author was well trained in rhetoric, and had a thorough understanding of the power of words.

If Paul did not write Hebrews, it is very likely that the author was a part of Paul's inner circle. In Hebrews 13:23 the author mentions Timothy as "our brother," indicating that the recipients, like Paul, knew him as an intimate friend. This detail, along with the fact that there is

2. Michael Smith, "How Did We Get the New Testament?" BIBL 210-002, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Lecture.

3. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Translated by J. E. L. Oulton, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.)

4. Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Hebrews," Sonic Light, 2016, accessed April 19, 2016, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/hebrews.pdf>.

5. Gal. 1:12.

6. William Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991,) xlix

no mention of the destruction of the temple, indicates that the book was written sometime pre-AD 70.

External evidence. There is really no way to conclude who among Paul’s peers was most qualified to be the author because, in the early church’s arguments over authorship, “the names of Paul, Barnabas, Luke, and Clement of Rome were mentioned; in current scholarship, Apollos, Silvanus, the deacon Philip, Priscilla and Aquila, Jude, Aristion, and others have found their proponents.”⁷ Of the possible authors that have been mentioned over time, Barnabas and Apollos possess some of the most unique features. In the year 200 AD an early church father named Tertullian quoted from Hebrews 6:4-8 and referenced the text as “an epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas.”⁸ In addition to being recognized first by an early church father, Barnabas was born a Levite (Acts 4:36), which would explain his knowledge and emphasis on Christ’s superiority over elements of the old Jewish system; he was nicknamed the “son of encouragement,” and the author of Hebrews calls his work a word of encouragement or “exhortation” in Hebrews 13:22; and he had ministry experience with Paul and John Mark. The mixture of early testimony, Jewish identification, and ministry experience with apostles, each help build Barnabas’ case for authorship, but there is still far too little evidence to establish a concrete conclusion.

It was Martin Luther who first suggested Apollos as a potential author, and for good reason.⁹ In Acts 18:24-25 Luke describes Apollos as “an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man ... mighty in the Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord; fervent in spirit, and teaching

7. William Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991,) xlix

8. Tertullian, “*On Modesty*,” Translated by Sydney Thalwell, In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, The Fathers of the Third Century, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885.)

9. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis*, Edited by Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Translated by Paul D. Pahl, Vol. 8, Lectures on Genesis (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1966).

accurately the things concerning Jesus....”¹⁰ Additionally Apollos was associated with Paul in the early years of the church in Corinth. These facts all line up to show how Apollos would have had a great understanding of the Old Testament, a burning desire to see the Jews rightly understand the finished work of Jesus and their own faith, and ample ability to write eloquently. While both of these men have reasonable qualifications for why they could have been the author, scholars have also found several reasons to discredit them. A great resource to view the pros and cons of each author is Herbert Bateman’s book, “Charts on the Book of Hebrews.”¹¹ In the end, Martin Luther said it best when he admitted, “the author of Hebrews is unknown and will probably not be known for a while.”¹²

Date of Hebrews (When?)

Hebrews was almost certainly written sometime before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. Many times throughout the book the author makes reference to priests conducting their activities in the present tense, which would indicate they were still operating in the temple. Hebrews 9:8-9 for example explicitly says, “The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time....”¹³ Additionally, if the book had been written after the temple was destroyed, the author would have certainly mentioned it and explained to the readers the relationship between Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross and the literal destruction of the temple and there is no mention of this in the text.

10. Acts 18:24-25.

11. Herbert W. Bateman, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids: MI Kregel Publications, 2012.)

12. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: In Word and Sacrament I*, Translated by E. Theodore. Bachmann, Vol. 35, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960).

13. Heb. 9:8-9.

Recipients, Historical Setting, and Occasion of Writing (Where and Why?)

The location of the original recipients is unknown, but the title “an epistle to the Hebrews” implies that the recipients were Jewish Christians.¹⁴ Since there is such a strong emphasis in the book on the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice, and the superiority of His priesthood, it is probable that the recipients of this letter were among the priests who had been saved (Acts 6:7), but whose hearts had become dull or sluggish regarding the Christian faith (Heb. 5:11), and were tempted to turn back to Judaism. The author felt that the recipients needed to be reminded about the commitment they had made to Christ and remotivated to persevere in the faith. If he were writing to Gentiles who were tempted by Judaism, he would have certainly mentioned why there was no longer a need for Jewish rituals such as circumcision, but he does not address any of those issues here.

Genre and Structure (What?)

Just as the authorship of Hebrews has been debated throughout Christian history, so has the genre and structure of the book. Some who have noticed the eloquence of Hebrews have argued that it was most likely something that would have been read aloud like an exhortation or sermon. While this is probably true, a definitive answer is still hard to come to and for practical purposes, it seems best to view the book as an epistle that was written to be read.

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Hebrews is to demonstrate that Christ is our high priest and the mediator of a “better covenant” which has been enacted on “better promises.”¹⁵ Hebrews 8-10 spells out

14. Constable.

15. Heb. 8:6.

this idea in great detail, with thoughts appropriated from Jeremiah 31:31-34. The main verses however, can be found in Hebrews 8:1-6, which explicitly note the authors reason for writing is to explain Christ as our high priest, seated at the right hand of God, the mediator of a new covenant.

Thematically speaking, Hebrews is a book of better things. In the NASB translation of the Bible, the word “better” appears 18 times to demonstrate that Jesus is better than the prophets, better than angels, better than Moses, better than Aaron, better than the law – anything that is compared to Him – He is over and above superior to it. Since this book was originally written for Jewish Christians who were tempted to revert back to following the law, the author made sure that he highlighted the best and most noble parts of Judaism, and showed that they do not even come close to Christ.

Outline of Hebrews

The components of this outline have been adapted from the outline of Hebrews in Zondervan’s NASB Study Bible, and the Essence Textbook.^{16 17}

1. Prologue: God’s Final Word in His Son	1:1-3
A. Old Testament revelation was fragmentary and occasional	1:1
B. New Testament Revelation was spoken in fullness and finality	1:1
C. Seven reasons for the Superiority of the Son’s Revelation	1:2-3
1. Jesus is the appointed heir of all things	1:2
2. Jesus made the world	1:2
3. Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory	1:3
4. Jesus is the exact representation of God’s nature	1:3
5. Jesus upholds all things which He made	1:3
6. Jesus made purification for sins	1:3
7. Jesus sat down at the right hand of God	1:3
2. The Superiority of Christ to Leaders of the Old Covenant	1:4-7:28

16. Kenneth L. Barker, *Zondervan NASB Study Bible*, Edited by Donald W. Burdick and Kenneth Boa, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1999,) 1782.

17. Elmer L. Towns, and Ben Gutierrez, *The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey*, (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2012,) 266.

A. Christ is Superior to the Angels	1:4-2:18
1. Seven Old Testament proofs of Christ Superiority over angels	1:4-14
a. Psalm 2:7	1:5
b. 2 Samuel 7:14	1:5
c. Psalm 97:7	1:6
d. Psalm 104:4	1:7
e. Psalm 45:6-7	1:8-9
f. Psalm 102:25-27	1:10-12
g. Psalm 110:1	1:13
2. WARNING 1/5: do not to ignore the revelation of God in His Son	2:1-4
a. Disregard for the law given by angels brought punishment	2:2
b. Disregard for the gospel of God brings even greater punishment	2:3-4
3. Further Scriptural proof of superiority over the angels	2:5-18
a. Earth was left subject to man not angels	2:5-8
b. Jesus made Himself lower than the angels to offer salvation to man	2:9-15
c. Christ did not take on angelic nature but human nature	2:16-18
B. Christ is Superior to Moses	3:1-4:13
1. Demonstration of Christ Superiority to Moses	3:1-6
a. Both partakers of a Heavenly calling	3:1
b. Both sent by the Father to lead His people from bondage to rest	3:1
c. Both were faithful to the Father	3:2
d. Jesus was the builder of the house; Moses was a part of the house	3:3
e. Jesus is equated with God	3:4
f. Moses was faithful as a servant; Christ was faithful as a Son	3:5-6
g. Moses was a part of the house; Christ is over the house	3:5-6
2. WARNING 2/5: Do not harden your heart but enter God's rest	3:7-4:13
a. Peril of unbelief	3:7-19
b. Promise remains of entering His rest	4:1
c. Partial entering of God's rest	4:2-8
d. Precedent to fully entering God's rest	4:9-13
C. Christ is Superior to Aaron	4:14-7:28
1. Christ as our High Priest	4:14-16
2. Qualifications of a High Priest	5:1-10
3. WARNING 3/5: Do not fall away from the faith	5:11-6:12
4. Certainty of God's promise	6:13-20
3. The Superior Sacrificial Work of Our High Priest	7-10
A. A Better Priest	7
B. A Better Ministry	8:1-6
C. A Better Covenant	8:7-13
D. A Better Tabernacle	9:1-12
E. A Better Sacrifice	9:13-10:18
1. Christ's Sacrifice offers a clean conscience	9:13-14
2. Christ's Sacrifice offers an eternal inheritance	9:15
3. Christ's Sacrifice purified both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries	9:16-24
4. Christ's Sacrifice only needed to be offered once	9:25-26
5. Christ's Sacrifice required His death, but it led to His resurrection	9:27-28

6. Christ's Sacrifice abolishes the need for more sacrifices	10:1-10
7. Christ's Sacrifice makes atonement for sins for all time	10:11-13
8. Christ's Sacrifice perfected for all time those who are being sanctified	10:14
9. Christ's Sacrifice leads to His law being written on believers' hearts	10:15-16
10. Christ's Sacrifice guarantees that sins will be completely forgiven	10:17-18
F. Therefore, brethren, we have...	10:19-39
1. Confidence to enter the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus	10:19-20
2. A great high priest over the house of God	10:21
3. A responsibility to draw near to God	10:22
4. A responsibility to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering	10:23
5. A responsibility to stimulate each other to love and good deeds	10:24
6. A responsibility to not forsake assembling together	10:25
7. A responsibility to encourage one another	10:25
G. WARNING 4/5: Do not shrink back from your confession of faith	10:26-39
4. Final Plea for Persevering Faith	11-12
A. Examples of Past Heroes of the Christian Faith	11
B. Encouragement for Persevering Faith	12:1-11
C. Exhortations for Persevering Faith	12:12-24
D. WARNING 5/5: Do not reject the Words of God	12:25-29
5. Conclusion	13
A. Practical Rules for Christian Living	13:1-17
B. Request for Prayer	13:18-19
C. Benediction	13:20-21
D. Personal Remarks	13:22-23
E. Greetings and Final Benediction	13:24-25

Development of the Argument of Hebrews

I. Prologue: God's Final Word in His Son 1:1-3

In each of Paul's previous epistles, he begins by giving a greeting that describes why he is writing and who he is writing to. The author of Hebrews differs from Paul in this regard, as he leaves out the greeting altogether, and proceeds straight into an exposition on what God has said through His son. The author recognizes that he is living at one of the most pivotal periods in human history, as "in these last days" God has ceased to speak to the prophets of old, and has chosen to speak to the world through His Son (1:1-2). In the former days, God spoke to His people in small portions, revealed gradually and occasionally, often through a single prophet or priest. At this time, God has spoken in fullness and finality through His Son Jesus. Just in case

the thought of God using Jesus to speak to His people sounded insignificant, the author goes on to give seven descriptions of Jesus that each point to why His revelation would be superior to anyone else's. Thematically speaking, the author wastes absolutely no time describing how God's new revelation to His people through Christ is far superior to even the greatest revelations that the prophets and people of old received. And so the book begins—looking forward to better things.

II. The Superiority of Christ to Leaders of the Old Covenant 1:4-7:28

After seven powerful descriptions of Jesus are given, the author could have put his pen down and said, “See, Jesus is better!” But rather than doing that, he uses the next seven chapters to compare and contrast Jesus to the most notable and exalted figure heads of the Old Testament – people who had revelations from God—demonstrating that the revelation God has now given us, through Jesus, is far superior to them all.

A. Christ is Superior to the Angels 1:4-2:18

To most Jews, the only being more exalted than an angel was God Himself. “Angels were involved in giving the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Deut. 33:2), and the law was considered God's supreme revelation.”¹⁸ In this section, the author clearly understands why the Jews would value and esteem the angels, and therefore refuses to speak critically about them. He calls them “ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.”¹⁹ The author uses Scripture from the Old Testament to show the Jews that Christ is greater than the angels (1:4-14), and therefore His message is also greater than theirs (2:1-4). Included within this argument is the first of five warnings found in the book: If disregard for the law given by angels

18. Kenneth Barker, note on Hebrews 1:4, 1783.

19. Heb. 1:14.

brought a certain punishment, how much greater will the punishment be for those who disregard the gospel and thus ignore the revelation of God in His Son (2:2-3).

Throughout the rest of Hebrews 2 the author makes multiple references to Psalm 8, continuing the theme of using Old Testament Scripture to show Christ's superiority over the angels. In doing so, he persuasively shows that God's original plan was for man to be sovereign over the earth, subject only to Him. Due to man's sin, the purposes of God have not been fully realized and for that reason Christ was willing to take on flesh and blood, "that through His death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."²⁰ None of this did He do for angels, or through angelic form. Jesus intentionally took on human flesh so that He could become like us in all ways, yet without sin (2:16-18).

B. Christ is Superior to Moses

3:1-4:13

In Hebrews 3 the author continues to emphasize the superiority of Christ's revelation by highlighting how Jesus's sonship makes Him worthy of more glory than Moses's position as a servant. In chapter 2 vs. 17, the author explains that the reason Jesus took on the form of man was so that He might become "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sons of the people."²¹ Here in chapter 3, that theme is continued. Jesus is called "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession."²² Throughout the next several chapters those two aspects of Christ, both as an apostle and a high priest, will be explored thoroughly.

20. Heb. 2:14-15 (NASB).

21. Heb. 2:17.

22. Heb. 3:1.

In this section, the author stresses how Christ's apostleship and sonship give Him superiority over Moses, and then gives a warning against disobedience and unbelief. In the Jewish mind, Moses and Jesus would have been viewed very similarly (Deut. 18:15): both were sent by the Father with a heavenly calling, both were called to liberate God's people from bondage to "rest" (4:3, 9), and both were faithful to the Father. As one textbook says, "Moses could be viewed as the premier prophet in all of God's salvation history until the coming of the Son."²³ As Moses and Christ are compared, the superiority of Christ is highlighted through two word pictures: 1) Moses is pictured as God's servant, whereas Christ is pictured as God's Son, and 2) Moses is seen as part of God's house, whereas Christ is over God's house (3:1-6). The author's purpose here was not to belittle Moses. If that was the case he would have never written Hebrews 11; rather he is showing just how significant Christ's revelation is, and giving the readers even more of a reason to believe and obey Christ, or run the risk of falling away or falling short of His rest, just as the people of Israel did under Moses. That is why the author spends only six verses comparing Christ and Moses (3:1-6), and twenty-seven verses (3:7-4:13) comparing the people who followed Moses with those who are now following Jesus. The warning here is: do not harden your hearts as the Israelites did, but believe and enter into God's rest.

III. Christ is superior to Aaron

4:14-6:20

Before the next section opens with its comparison of the superior priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron, it offers a message of hope. In the final three verses of chapter 4, the author reminds his readers to stand firm in their confession of faith because they have something that those following Moses did not have: that is Jesus, the Son of God, as their great High Priest. He

23. Towns and Gutierrez, 267.

sympathizes with our weaknesses, He was tempted as we are, yet without sin, and He gives us confidence to approach His throne, because it is a throne of grace—offering mercy in our time of need (4:14-16). These three verses transition the readers into an exposition on Christ’s superior priesthood while also reminding them that Christ’s superiority is a good thing for them.

Chapter 5 begins with a list of qualifications for every high priest, but notes key differences that distinguished Christ’s priesthood from that of Aaron, or any other priest for that matter. After going through his list, the author senses that his readers have grown “dull of hearing.”²⁴ Since this message was most likely originally spoken orally, it makes perfect sense how the speaker could have noticed the physical drowsiness of his audience and related it to their spiritual sluggishness, but even if it were originally written as an epistle, the point is still made that the recipients had become lazy and were not progressing in the Christian life as they should. The warning here is pretty strong: there is a real potential for falling away from the faith completely, and a person’s apostasy can be an indication that their faith was never really genuine (6:4-6). Thankfully, the assurance that follows is equally strong: God cannot lie (6:18), and because of that, His people should have “Strong Encouragement”²⁵ that they too will enter the Holy place that Jesus, their High Priest, has entered before them (6:19-20).

IV. The Superior Sacrificial Work of our High Priest

7-10

In chapters 5 and 6 Jesus is described as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, but since the Jews appointed priests according to the priestly line of Levi, they must have been wondering, “How can Melchizedek’s priesthood replace the Levitical

24. Heb. 5:11 (NASB).

25. Heb. 6:18.

priesthood, when the Levitical priesthood was sanctioned by the law of Moses (Ex. 28:1-4)?”²⁶

The author answers this question in two ways: First, he explains how Abraham’s tithes to Melchizedek in Genesis 14:17-20 show that Abraham considered himself and all of his descendants inferior to Melchizedek because Abraham paid him a tithe. Essentially the one who pays the tithe is inferior to the one who receives it. Secondly, in Hebrews 7:26-28, the author argues that Christ is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens;”—no priest appointed through the law of Moses would be able to meet any of those qualifications, but they were all weak and needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins just as much as for the sins of the people. When Christ offered Himself on the cross it was not just a martyr’s death. It was a once-and-for-all substitutionary sacrifice to God on behalf of the sins of the whole world—past, present, and future. There is no further payment needed, as Jesus uttered “tetelestai”²⁷ He declared forever, it is finished.

Hebrews 8-10 gets into the details of what is “better” about the new covenant that Christ has given His life for. Hebrews 8:6 is a key verse, indicating that Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry, mediated it by a better covenant, and enacted it on better promises. The same is true for the tabernacle (9:1-12), and for sacrifices (9:13-10:18). In each instance, Christ proves why His priesthood, His ministry, His covenant, His tabernacle, and His sacrifice is far better than the previous method, and then declares that He is taking away the first way to establish the second (8:13; 9:8; 10:9). Therefore, the author uses the last 21 verses of chapter 10 to guide his readers in what they should now do regarding all of what Christ has done. He encourages them to: 1) have confidence to enter the Holy place by the blood of Jesus; 2) draw near to God with a

26. Towns and Gutierrez, 270.

27. Jn. 19:30.

sincere heart in full assurance of faith; 3) hold fast to their confession of hope without wavering; 4) consider how to stimulate each other to love and good deeds; 5) not forsake their own assembling together; 6) and to encourage one another, all the more as they see the day of the Lord's return drawing near (10:19-21).

There is also a warning given here: If anyone were to draw back from the law of Moses on the account of two or three witnesses he would die without mercy (10:28). The author wants his readers to know how much the punishment will be even more severe for those who shrink back from their confession of faith in Christ. This warning is strategically placed here so that everyone who reads it will recognize, knowing what we know now, there is no turning back.

V. Final Plea for Persevering Faith

11-12

Hebrews 11 has become one of the most recognized chapters in the Bible and is often referred to as the "Hall of Faith." In the chapter the author explains what faith is, and then describes how each one of the people mentioned demonstrated faith in their lives. The chapter perfectly transitions into encouragement and exhortation for perseverance in the faith for believers today. The reader learns that the heroes of chapter 11 are not just characters from the past but powerful examples for current believers to follow (12:1-3). There is exhortation to strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble (12:12). Essentially, the readers need to know that they have a greater ability to resist the devil than what they have tapped into so far. It is after this that the author gives his final warning in the book: "do not refuse Him who is speaking."²⁸ The readers are warned that God is going to shake the world and remove everything that can be shaken (12:26). However, the kingdom that believers are receiving is one

28. Heb. 12:25.

that shall not be shaken (12:27). The readers should therefore offer their service to God with reverence and awe because God is a consuming fire (12:28-29).”²⁹

VI. Conclusion

13

The conclusion of the book consists of an 18 verse list of practical rules for Christian living, followed by a request for prayer, a few personal remarks, and a short benediction.

Summary

Hebrews, perhaps more than any other book of the New Testament, emphasizes the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Christ as God’s full and final revelation to His people. The author of this book was utterly convinced that if the people could get a proper view of Jesus, both who He is and what He has done, every other temptation in life would feel small and insignificant compared to His glory that has been revealed to them. Through following the example of Jesus, and so many who have run the race before, believers are encouraged to persevere in the faith as sons and daughters of the High Priest and King.

29. Towns and Gutierrez, 273.

Bibliography

- Barker, Kenneth L. *Zondervan NASB Study Bible*. Edited by Donald W. Burdick and Kenneth Boa. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1999.
- Bateman, Herbert W. *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012.
- Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*. Translated by J. E. L. Oulton. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.
- Constable, Thomas L. "Notes on Hebrews." Sonic Light. 2016. Accessed April 19, 2016. <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/hebrews.pdf>.
- Lane, William L. *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews*. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: In Word and Sacrament I*. Translated by E. Theodore Bachmann. Vol. 35. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis*. Edited by Jaroslav Jan Pelikan. Translated by Paul D. Pahl. Vol. 8. Lectures on Genesis. Saint Louis: Concordia, 1966.
- Sano, Roy I. *Outside the Gate: A Study of the Letter to the Hebrews*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014.
- Smith, Michael. "How Did We Get the New Testament?" BIBL 210-002, Lynchburg. Lecture.
- Tertullian. "On Modesty." Translated by Sydney Thalwell. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. IV. The Fathers of the Third Century. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885.
- Towns, Elmer L., and Ben Gutierrez. *The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2012.