

CHAPTER 9

HEBREWS—SECTION 3

III. THE LIFE OF FAITH (10:19 - 13:19)

The book of Hebrews now changes from the primarily doctrinal section to the primarily practical section. Since Jesus is himself better than any other to bring us salvation, and since his ministry is superior to that of any other, we must trust in him alone for our salvation. This theme of faith is the recurrent topic of this section.

Ending inclusio (10:19-23)

Epilogue to Superiority over Aaron section; *inclusio* began with 4:14-16

- 1) Hold the confession (4:14; 10:23)
- 2) Draw near to God (4:16; 10:22)
- 3) Our great high priest (4:14; 10:21)
- 4) Confidence (4:16; 10:19)

A. Encouragement to faithfulness (10:19-39)

“Constructive feedback” cycle: Encourage – Criticize – Encourage

1. First encouragement: faith, hope, and love (10:19-25)

Three hortatory subjunctives: “Let us”

vv. 19-22, Faith, verb in v. 22, “let us draw near” (1st hortatory subjunctive)

Modified by participles:

v. 19, ἔχοντες *echontes*, “having”

v. 19, Boldness

v. 21, A priest

v. 22, ῥεραντισμένοι *rherantismenoi*, “hearts having been sprinkled”

λελουσμένοι *lelousmenoi*, “bodies having been washed”

—Cf. Ezek 36:25-26; Eph 5:25-26

v. 20, Curtain = flesh

Cf. “through his blood” in 9:12; 10:19

v. 23, Hope, “let us hold fast” (2nd hortatory subjunctive)

hope = substance of expectation

God is faithful, 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; Heb 11:11

vv. 24-25, Love, “let us consider” (3rd hortatory subjunctive)

v. 24, παροξυσμόν *paroxusmon*, “paroxysm, stirring up” (bad when Paul and Barnabas quarreled, Acts 15:39)

Participles in v. 25:

- Not deserting, ἐγκαταλείποντες *egkataleipontes*—forsaking, abandoning
- But encouraging

“The Day”; cf. 1 Cor 3:13; 1 Thess 5:4

2. Fourth warning passage: Danger of unbelief (10:26-31)

vv. 26-27, Statement of the principle

Conditional participle, “if we sin deliberately”

Sin deliberately = verb “desert” (v. 25; cf. *gar* in v. 26)

No sacrifice, *contra* 9:7; Num 15:27-31

v. 27, ὑπεναντίους *hupenantious*, “adversaries”; cf. 2 Pet 2:20-21

vv. 28-29, argument from analogy with Mosaic law

v. 28, Deut 17:6; 19:15

v. 29, Participles of apostasy:

- καταπατήσας *katapatesas*, having trampled down
- ἡγησάμενος *hegesamenos*, having reckoned
- ἐνεβρίσας *enubrisas*, having insulted

“By which he was sanctified,” views:

Arminian, cf. Westcott

Mere professors (traditional Reformed view)

Not loss of salvation (physical judgments view)

Hypothetical (cf. Kent and Guthrie, as 6:4-6)

vv. 30-31, Argument from Scripture

v. 30, “We know the one who said . . . “

Deut 32:35-36 (text of J. Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”); Ps 135:14

Form of “vengeance is mine; I will repay” = Rom 12:19, not MT or LXX

This is a good quotation to use, because of the context of Deut 32, stressing the danger of apostasy. Christ is the God of Israel (Heb 3:12).

v. 31, A fearful thing

contra 2 Sam 24:14 (David a believer)

3. Second encouragement: their former experience (10:32-39)

vv. 32-34, Former faithfulness in persecution

τοῦτο *touto* = “partly, sometimes”

Early persecution, Acts 5:41 (apostles in Jerusalem)

General disgrace, 1 Cor 4:9, a theatrical spectacle (apostles & Paul in Corinth)

Companions: Acts 8:2, men buried Stephen

2 Tim 1:16-18, Onesiphorus

v. 34, Text variant: δεσμίοις *desmiois*, prisoners (UBS {B}), cf. 13:3

Cf. Saul (Acts 9:2; 22:4-5; 26:10-11)

δεσμοῖς *desmois*, “bonds”; or *desmois mou*, “my bonds”

Author not necessarily in bonds

Seizure of possessions

ἄρπαγή *harpagē*, cf. ἄρπαγμός *harpagmos* in Phil 2:6

If in Jerusalem, cf. book of James

If in Rome, could be Nero, A.D. 64; but more probably Claudius, A.D. 49

Expulsion of Jews from Rome mentioned in Acts 18:2; and in Suetonius, *Claud.* 25, who blames “Chrestus”

Also other cases, as Jason in Acts 17:9

Text variant: best—“you have yourselves (i.e., your souls)”; cf. Luke 9:25; UBS {A}; Byz has “in/with yourselves”

vv. 35-39, promised reward closer now

v. 35, Confidence; v. 19

Reward

v. 36, Need patience, endurance

“The promise”—4:1; 6:12, 15; 9:15; 11:9, 13, 17, 39; 2 Pet. 3:4, 9, 13

This promise is one and the same for both OT and NT believers, an evidence showing the unity of the church in all dispensations.

Note these other examples of this type of usage, using other figures of speech: Luke 13:28-29; Heb 7:6; 10:36; 11:9-10, 13-14, 16, 39-40; 12:22, 28; 13:14; Rev 21:1-3, 10, 12, 14. These verses refer to “promise(s), city, country, heavenly Jerusalem, unshaken kingdom.” They show the unity of the people of God under the Abrahamic covenant. (e.g., note Rev 21:12, 14)

vv. 37-38, Quotation of Hab 2:3-4

Habakkuk 2:3-4

For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.

Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come and will not delay.

“See, he is puffed up;
his desires are not upright —
but the righteous will live by his faith.”

Quoted three times in NT: Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38

Free translation of Hebrew, similar to LXX, not same

Righteous one to live by faith (be faithful, not fall away)

God not pleased with apostates

v. 39, Confidence in Christians

Preservation of soul (1 Pet 2:9)

Same as v. 34, yourselves

B. OT Illustrations of faithfulness (ch. 11)

[These illustrations of faith include, in addition to examples from the OT, additional examples from the intertestament period.]

1. The essence of faith (11:1-3)

v. 1, ὑπόστασις *hupostasis* KJV substance (cf. 1:3)
ASV confident assurance (cf. 3:14)

ἔλεγχος *elegchos* (hapax) KJV evidence

ASV conviction (see Buchsel *TDNT*, conviction results from divine influence)

v. 3, πίστει *pistei*, “by faith”; an example showing what faith is

Dative form (18x)

Genitive with *dia* (2x)

Accusative with *kata* (2x)

eis to, purpose or result

An example of faith—our belief that the universe was not made out of things that are visible. While modern science has demonstrated to most people’s satisfaction that the universe had a beginning from “nothing” (no matter, energy, time or space dimensions), certainly nothing observable or measurable (“visible”), Christians have believed this all along, from the testimony of Scripture.

2. The faith of the antediluvian patriarchs (11:4-7)

Abel, v. 4

Gen. 4:3-10

Offered blood? Heb 9:22 (Owen, Pink)

Character, faith? Gen 4:4; Matt 23:35

δι’ αὐτῆς *di’ autēs*, “through it,” faith or sacrifice? (probably faith)

Still speaks; cf. Gen 4:10; Heb 12:24

Enoch, vv. 5-6

Gen 5:24 LXX

Jude 14-15

v. 6, Two requirements of faith: God exists, God rewards

Noah, v. 7

Gen 6:9; 7:1

1 Pet 3:18-20; 2 Pet 2:5

δι' ἧς *di'hes*, “through which,” ark or faith? (probably faith again; Guthrie says ark)

3. The faith of the postdiluvian patriarchs (11:8-22)

(All of these follow the giving of the Abrahamic covenant)

Abraham, vv. 8-19

v. 8, Leaving Ur

Gen 11:31 - 12:5; Acts 7:2-4

(Inherits the land)

vv. 9-10, Sojourning in Canaan

Gen 12:6, 9, etc.

With Isaac and Jacob (heirs also, Gen 26:2-5; 28:13-15)

When Jacob was born, Isaac was 60 years old and Abraham was 160 years old. Abraham lived for 15 more years after the birth of Jacob.

City — New Jerusalem

Shows that OT believers and NT believers seek same promises (see discussion and references above, under Heb 10:36)

vv. 11-12, begetting Isaac

Gen 17:15-21; Rom 4:16-22

Subject of v. 11: Sarah (KJV, NASB, ESV, NIV 2012, Guthrie) or Abraham (UBS {C}, NIV 1984)? Cf. discussion in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT* 602.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. (NIV 1984)

By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. (ESV)

v. 12, “As good as dead” masculine

Cf. Kent 225-26, three possibilities for understanding “depositing of seed” as a function of Abraham and/or Sarah

vv. 13-16, parenthetical remarks about the patriarchs in general: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

v. 13, Died strangers (Gen 23:4); not received promises (implies resurrection; cf. Matt 24:31-32)

v. 14, πατρίδα *patrida*, “fatherland”

v. 15, Contrary to fact: εἰ *ei* + secondary tense of the indicative + ἄν *an*

v. 16, City, same as v. 10

vv. 17-19, Abraham’s sacrificing of Isaac

Gen.22:1-10; Jas 2:21-23

v. 17, μονογενῆ *monogene*, “unique”; translated “only begotten” in KJV, NASB; “one and only” in NIV

Isaac, v. 20

Gen 25:28; cf. 27:33 (because of deception), 37, 39-40; 28:1-4 (because of belief)

Jacob, v. 21

Gen 48:1-6, 10-21 (Joseph’s sons, 41:50-52)

Gen 47:31 — LXX would read $\pi\epsilon\tau\tau\eta$ *matteh* “staff”
MT reads $\mu\iota\tau\tau\eta$ *mittah* “bed” (KJV)

Joseph, v. 22

Gen 50:22-26 (cf. 15:14-16); Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32

Contrast the faith of Joseph with the Egyptian belief and practice of mummification and the sanctity of the tomb, providing all the blessings of the afterlife

4. The faith of the saints of the exodus and conquest (11:23-31)

Moses' parents, v. 23

Exod 1:22; 2:2

Moses, vv. 24-29

vv. 24-26, Casting his lot with the Hebrews

Exod 2:10-12

v. 25, Enjoyment of sin

Sin of omission, not being a Hebrew

v. 26, Reproach of Christ (13:13)

Same sort of reproaches as deliverer of God's people, Acts 7:25

Cf. Ethan in Ps 89:50-51, speaking of David's line

vv. 27-29, Leading the exodus from Egypt

v. 27, Persevering in facing Pharaoh

Not fearful, *contra* Exod 2:14-15

v. 28, Passover instituted by faith (Exod 12)

v. 29, Crossing the Red Sea (LXX), Exod 14

Faith of Moses and of others

Joshua, v. 30

Josh 6

Rahab, v. 31

Josh 2; Jas 2:25

5. The faith of others in Israel's history (11:32-38)

Named OT saints, v. 32

Gideon
Barak
Samson
Jephthah
David
Samuel
the prophets

Accomplishments through faith, vv. 33-35a

Conquered kingdoms (Saul, David)

Administered justice (David, Solomon)

Gained what was promised (note plural; not singular, 11:13, 39)

Shut the mouths of lions (David, Samson, Daniel)

Quenched the fury of the flames (Dan 3)

Escaped the edge of the sword (Elijah)

Whose weakness was turned to strength (Gideon, Samson)

Who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies (David, Judas Maccabee)

Women received back their dead, raised to life again (Elijah in 1 Kgs 17:17-24 [son of widow of Zarephath]; Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:18-37 [son of Shunemmite woman]; cf. man on Elisha's bones, 2 Kgs 13:21)

Sufferings through faith, vv. 35b-38

Were tortured—to obtain a better resurrection (2 Macc 7:9-14)

Faced jeers and flogging (Jer 20:2)

Were chained and put in prison (Joseph, etc.)

Were stoned (Zechariah in 2 Chr 24:20-22; cf. Stephen, and Paul in Lystra)

Were sawed in two (Isaiah)

[Were put to the test], tempted to apostasize; not in UBS {C}, dittography for “sawed in two”

Were put to death by the sword (Urijah in Jer 26:23)

Went about in sheepskins and goatskins (Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:13; 2 Kgs 1:8; 2:8)

Destitute, persecuted, mistreated

(World was not worthy of them)

Wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, holes (cf. Huguenot “Church in the Desert” in France; “Killing Time” in Scotland)

6. The rewards of faith (11:39-40)

v. 39, No promise yet

v. 40, Something better for us

Christians (Jew & Gentile) included in the promise; then they (OT saints) will be perfected; cf. 12:23.

Physical resurrection to come

C. Faithfulness in suffering (12:1-13)

In the first part of this division of Hebrews the author of Hebrews has encouraged the Christians to remain faithful to the Lord, including a strong warning for those who would consider falling away. He then gave the examples of faith found in their history. Now in this section he especially applies these encouragements, warnings, and examples to their own situation and the sufferings they are experiencing.

1. Examples in suffering (12:1-3)

v. 1, OT and intertestament saints

Verb: let us run

Participles: Having (cloud)

Having thrown off (hinderances and sins)

(v.2), Looking away (to Jesus)

Witnesses: hall of fame idea better than amphitheater idea (cf. 11:39; but Guthrie likes spectators idea, in spite of Greek usage)

vv. 2-3, Jesus

ἀφορῶντες *aphorontes*, looking away; cf. 11:26, ἀπέβλεπεν *apeblepen* (Moses was looking away from Egypt unto the reward)

ἀρχηγόν *archegon*, originator, leader, pioneer; found here & 2:10

anti + genitive = “for the sake of” (*TDNT*)

v. 3, Text variant: “opposition of sinners . . .”

Unto himself (probable; UBS {C}, A Byz)

Unto themselves (MSS support: P^{13} P^{46} K D; cf. Num 16:38, “censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives”)

2. Purpose of suffering (12:4-11)

In this section “chastening” or “discipline” is the theme. This is suffering sent by God to help and strengthen his people.

vv. 4-6, Their present softness

v. 4, No blood yet (cf. 10:32)

Perhaps not a Jerusalem destination: Stephen, Acts 7:60

James, Acts 12:2

Others, Acts 22:4; 26:10

(But also, if written after A.D. 64, some killed in Rome)

vv. 5-6, Don't remember Scripture

Proverbs 3:11-12,

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
and do not resent his rebuke,
Because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.

Terms for discipline:

παιδεία *paideia*, child-training

ἐλέγχω *elegcho*, correct, reprove

παιδεύω *paideuo*, to discipline, train

μαστιγῶ *mastigoo*, to beat with whip

vv. 7-8, Significance of suffering

Shows that we are sons

v. 7, ὑπομένετε *hypomenete*, you endure

Indicative—ASV, RSV, NASB

Imperative—NIV

UBS text can be translated either way; KJV uses different text (*ei* instead of *eis*), makes it conditional, “if you endure . . .”

vv. 9-11, Profit from suffering

A fortiori argument

v. 9, Father of spirits, term of exaltation

v. 10, Discipline to have us receive holiness

v. 11, Peaceful fruit of righteousness

Genitive of apposition: Jas 3:18; “joy,” Jas 1:12

3. Their present sufferings (12:12-13)

v. 12, Isa 35:3, in anticipation of the kingdom

Don't feel sorry for yourself!

v. 13, Prov 4:26 LXX

“Lame turned out of the way”; χωλός *cholos* (BDAG “lame, crippled”)

Remove obstacles to faithfulness

D. ***Fifth warning passage: Danger of sacrificing salvation for temporary comfort (12:14-29)***

1. The danger of falling short (12:14-17)

Falling short leads to greater and greater apostasy

Imperative: pursue Peace

Sanctification

Participle: watching Lest someone lack (fall short)

Lest a root of bitterness

Lest someone should be immoral or unholy

v. 14, τὸν ἁγιασμόν *ton hagasmon*; article, cf. v. 10

v. 15, Watching; office of bishop; cf. 13:17

Root of bitterness (apostate Israelites in Deut 29:18)

v. 16, Fornicator

Godless (KJV “profane”) as Esau (sold birthright, Gen 25:33-34)

v. 17, No repentance for Esau (Gen 27:30-40)

2. The fearfulness of falling short (12:18-29)

a. Majesty of Mt. Sinai (12:18-21)

v. 18, ὄρει *orei*, text problem; gloss from v. 22 (UBS omit {B})

Fearful Mt. Sinai, Exod 19:10-25; 20:18-21; Deut 4:10-13, 24

v. 20, Exod 19:12-13

v. 21, Moses trembled

At burning bush, Acts 7:32

With golden calf, Deut 9:19

Or Moses trembled with the rest, Exod 19:16

b. Greater majesty of Mt. Zion (12:22-24)

v. 22, Mt. Zion = heavenly Jerusalem

See above, 11:10

Cf. Gal 4:22-26

Myriads of angels (in festal gathering)

v. 23 (To festal gathering) + church of firstborn

To God, judge of all

To spirits of just, perfected men (11:40)

v. 24, To Jesus, mediator of new covenant

Perhaps a distinction: νέος *neos* (new in time); not καινός *kainos* (new in quality)

To blood of sprinkling, speaking a better thing than that of Abel, Gen 4:10

c. Our greater responsibility (12:25-29)

vv. 25-27, Initial warning: “Beware lest you refuse . . . “

Reasons:

(1) Importance of speaker

God through Moses, giving instruction on earth

God through the Messiah, (speaking) from heaven; 4:14; 6:20; 7:26; 9:24 (similar argument in 2:2-3)

(2) Power of his command

Voice shook earth, Exod 19:18

Will shake heaven and earth, Hag 2:6

Transition to v. 28, “things not being shaken”

v. 28, Concluding encouragement:

“Let us have grace” (or “be grateful”)

Receiving unshakable kingdom

Causal use of participle, “because, since”

“Through which (grace) let us serve God acceptably with reverence and awe”

v. 29, Concluding motivation and warning

Deut 4:24

Cf. statement of John the Baptist about the judgment of Jesus, Luke 3:16-17

E. Miscellaneous Christian duties (13:1-19)

1. Social duties (13:1-6)

v. 1, Brotherly love, Rom 12:10

v. 2, Friendliness to strangers and traveling Christians (Cf. 2 and 3 John)

(Angel visitors): Abraham, Lot, Gideon, Manoah

v. 3, Remember prisoners and ones being mistreated (cf. Matt 25:37-40)

v. 4, Chastity in marriage

Marriage is honorable, or let marriage be honorable? (no verb in the Greek)

KJV, indicative

ASV, NIV, NASB, ESV, imperative (better)

God will judge fornicators and adulterers

vv. 5-6, No coveting

Without money-love, 1 Tim 3:3; 6:10

Be content

God takes care, Deut 31:6; Josh 1:5

Ps 118:6

2. Ecclesiastical duties (13:7-19)

v. 7, Remember past leaders (cf. v. 17)

And imitate them

Past leaders:

Pres. participle used substantively often

Urged to remember them

“Outcome,” ἐκβασις *ekbasis*, often means death

ἐλάλησαν *elalesan*, “they spoke,” past (cf. pres. in v. 17)

Present leaders mentioned in v. 17

vv. 8-9, Be stable in the faith

Jesus the same

Cf. LXX Mal 3:6; divine title in Ps 102:27, “But you remain the same, and your years will never end” (quoted in Heb 1:12)

“Meats” = legal regulations about meats

Cf. Col 2:16; 1 Cor 8:8

vv. 10-14, Bear reproach of Christ

vv. 10-11, two interpretations:

(1) We Christians vs. Jews; Jesus’ sacrifice is better than the Jews’ sacrifices

(2) We Christian Jews vs. non-Christian Jews; emphasize *gar*, “for,” at v. 11; we Jews have an altar, the sin offering on the Day of Atonement (*contra* other sin offerings, Lev 6:25-26), Lev 16:27

Bodies carried out, Lev 16:27

v. 12, Jesus fulfilled type

v. 13, We must identify with Jesus, the antitype

Thus suffer reproach ourselves

v. 14, Our reward not in this age, but in the next

vv. 15-16, Perform spiritual sacrifices

Sacrifices “spiritualized”

v. 15, Praise through everything

Confessing his name

Isa 57:19

Text variation in Hos 14:2 (14:3 in LXX & MT)

MT פָּרִים שֶׁפָּתֵינוּ נֹהַר *parim sephathenu*, young bullocks of our lips (פָּרַי *par* = young bullock)

LXX in Hebrew would be פְּרִי מִשֶּׁפָּתֵינוּ נֹהַר *peri missephathenu*, fruit from our lips (this reading favored by BDB)

v. 16, Do not neglect

Doing good

Fellowship

v. 17, Obey present leaders

Obey and submit

They watch for your souls

As having to give account, 1 Cor 3:13-15

That they may do it (watch) with joy

For that is unprofitable for you, 2 Cor 5:10

vv. 18-19, Pray for the writer and his companions

Plural indicates companions, “us, we”

We have good conscience (probably had been persecuted)

That I may be restored to you more quickly