

CHRISTOPHER A. RICHARDSON

Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Mohr Siebeck

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Christopher A. Richardson

Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith

Jesus' Faith as the Climax of Israel's History
in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This work is a slightly revised version of my Ph.D. thesis, which was successfully defended at the University of Aberdeen in 2009. I would like first to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Francis Watson, whose guidance and recommendations contributed to a highly rewarding season of academic research and exploration. I am extremely grateful not only for his patient oversight, but also his willingness to continue in his supervisory role even after assuming his new post at the University of Durham. I would also like to thank my examiners, Dr. Grant Macaskill and, especially, Dr. Paul Ellingworth, who addressed several issues of primary importance and provided detailed comments for consideration prior to publication.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations and citations in this monograph, including the bibliography, are in accordance with *The SBL Handbook of Style* (1999). The exceptions include:

Bavinck, <i>RD</i>	H. Bavinck, <i>Reformed Dogmatics</i> , edited by J. Bolt, translated by J. Vriend
Calvin, <i>Institutes</i>	J. Calvin, <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> , edited by J. T. McNeill, translated by F. L. Battles
Joüon	P. Joüon, <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> , translated and revised by T. Muraoka
Louw and Nida	J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i>

With regard to commentaries on Hebrews, only the author's last name and page(s) have been provided.

English translations of ancient texts found in the Loeb Classical Library have been retained, but all other translations of primary and secondary sources are mine unless noted.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the epistle to the Hebrews, faith (πίστις) is the means by which God's people are saved and the virtue by which they must persevere unto eschatological salvation. And, as all acknowledge, the author of Hebrews¹ gives a great deal of attention to the topic of faith, both in terms of its central importance for the present, confessing community of believers and its manifestation in the past by those who are identified as 'fathers' (1.1) and 'elders' (11.2). The exhortations to the original addressees, who were most likely Jewish Christians,² with respect to persevering in faith are united with examples of unbelief (e.g., 3.7–4.13) and steadfast confidence (e.g., 11.4–38) for the purpose of warning and motivating those who were struggling in the contest of faith (12.1–4). Indeed, several statements suggest that some were even on the verge of abandoning their confession of faith (cf. 6.4–8; 10.23–31) and throwing away their confidence (10.35) due to spiritual immaturity and/or fatigue, as well as the potential for further

¹ There have been many suggestions regarding the authorship of Hebrews, including Paul, Luke, and Clement of Rome (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.1–4; 6.25.11–14); and, although the evidence is far from conclusive, it is intriguing that one of the earliest testimonies comes from Tertullian (ca. AD 160–220), who casually acknowledged it as the work of the apostle Barnabas (*Pud.* 20.2; cf. also Acts 4.36–37; 11.23–24; 14.14–15). For a discussion of this subject, read Frederic Gardiner's introduction to Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NPNF¹).

² The continuity that is affirmed between Israel's forefathers and the first audience (cf. 1.1; 2.1–4; 3.7–12; 4.1–2; 8.8–12; 11.2, 39–40; 12.18–28) as well as the absence of Jewish-Gentile relations or controversies (e.g., circumcision, food laws, and idolatry) strongly favor a Jewish-Christian congregation. The author's exhortation in 13.13 also appears to support this conclusion; that is, to exhort the people to go 'outside the camp' (ἐξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς) is to use language that is more suitable for religious and ethnic Jews. F. F. Bruce comments, 'In this context the "camp" stands for the established fellowship and ordinances of Judaism... They had been accustomed to think of the "camp" and all that was inside it as sacred, while everything outside it was profane and unclean' (p. 381; cf. pp. 5–9). In other words, speaking in this manner would resonate with a Jewish group that was struggling to abandon fully the covenantal practices of Judaism that have been fulfilled/perfected by Jesus (cf. 10.1–2; 13.9–10). Further, the exhortation to go outside the camp is coupled with the reminder that they have here no 'lasting city' (Jerusalem? Note ἐξω τῆς πόλεως in 13.12; and Rev. 20.9); rather, they seek the 'city to come' (13.14), which refers to the Jewish hope of the heavenly Jerusalem (11.10, 16; 12.22; cf. Isa. 62.6–12; Rev. 21.9–27).

persecution (5.11–14; 12.4–13; 13.3, 6). The author's ecclesial concerns, therefore, explain to a certain extent why faith and related concepts have been discussed throughout the letter and why there is a constant effort to integrate the exhortations to remain faithful (cf. 3.14; 6.11) with positive and negative examples of faith from Jewish Scripture and narratives.

1. A Christological Controversy

As faith is one of the defining characteristics of Hebrews, many have attempted, to various degrees, to explain the author's overall concept of faith.³ And while these studies are beneficial on a number of levels, it is nevertheless apparent that insufficient attention has been paid to Jesus' own faith and faithfulness in particular; in fact, this topic rarely has been addressed,⁴ and none of the discussions offer a detailed exegetical and systematic examination of the relevant verses. Also, the relative disregard for Jesus' faith(fulness) in Hebrews is somewhat surprising given the ongoing debates over whether the πίστις Χριστοῦ expressions in Paul's epistles convey one's faith in Christ (objective genitive) or Christ's faith in/faithfulness to God (subjective genitive).⁵ That is, while debates over πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul have produced a significant amount of literature over the years,⁶ little effort has been made to clarify how Hebrews advances this aspect of the early church's christology, including how the faith of Christ is related to the faith of God's people, not to mention the recapitulation of faith in Hebrews 11.

³ E.g., Ménégos 1894, 128–56; Spicq, 2.371–81; Grässer 1965a; Michel, 376–79; Rusche 1971, 94–104; Dautzenberg 1973, 161–77; Schlatter 1982 [1927], 520–36; Thompson 1982, 53–80; Rissi 1987, 104–13; Cosby 1988a, 25–40; Attridge, 311–14; Hurst 1990, 119–24; Lindars 1991, 101–18; Weiß, 564–71; and Rhee 2001.

⁴ E.g., see Hamm 1990, 270–91; Wallis 1995, 145–61; Olbricht 2007, 122–32; and Still 2008, 40–50. The first essay by Hamm was instrumental in bringing more focused attention to this topic.

⁵ Cf. Rom. 3.22, 26; Gal. 2.16, 20; 3.22, 26; Phil. 3.9.

⁶ For a few voices in this debate, see Johnson 1982, 77–90; Wallis 1995, 65–144; Bockmuehl 1997, 210–13; Hays 2002, 119–62, 272–97; and N. T. Wright 2009, 117–21, 203–4, who argue for the subjective genitive reading in one or more of the relevant passages, as well as Dunn 2002, 249–71; Westerholm 2004, 305–6 n. 18 (cf. remarks on pp. 366–404); F. Watson 2004, 71–77; Fee 2007, 223–26; and Matlock 2007, 173–203, who advocate the objective genitive. For recent monographs on this topic, see Ulrichs (2007), who includes 1 Thess. 1.3 as part of the debate, and the volume of essays edited by Bird and Sprinkle (2010).

But what is more incredible is that some contend that this doctrine is nowhere to be found in Hebrews, or Scripture for that matter. According to one commentator, Heb. 12.2, specifically the designation of Jesus as the ‘pioneer and perfecter of faith,’ does not refer to the faith of Christ for ‘Scripture nowhere speaks of Christ as a believer.’⁷ Similarly, Ceslas Spicq, who wrote one of the most erudite and consulted commentaries on Hebrews, made this conclusion when discussing the same christological title in 12.2:

[N]ombreux commentateurs protestants et quelques catholiques... donnent à πίστις le sens de confiance (cf. II, 13, ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθώς ἐπ’ αὐτῷ; III, 2, Ἰησοῦν πιστόν) et comprennent que durant sa vie sur terre le Christ a lui-même entrepris les combats de la foi, dès sa tentation au désert et jusqu’au Calvaire; du début à la fin de sa vie, il a tout accepté dans l’abandon à la volonté de son Père, et de même qu’il a appris la miséricorde (II, 17) et l’obéissance (V, 8), son âme a vécu dans la confiance en Dieu; mais, jamais *l’Écriture ne parle du Christ comme d’un croyant*. De plus on a vu que la πίστις de XI, 1 a le sens de garantie et de certitude. C’est à ce titre que le Christ fournirait au coureur le gage infaillible du succès final.⁸

Spicq’s argument, of course, depends on his interpretation of Heb. 11.1, but he also refuses to allow the other references to Jesus’ confidence, πιστός, and obedience to inform his reading of 12.2. Moreover, since he too was convinced that ‘l’Écriture ne parle du Christ comme d’un croyant,’ which is to imply that the New Testament, including Hebrews, never decidedly attributes the terminology of πίστις and/or πιστεύω to Christ, one can understand why he thought that neither Heb. 12.2 nor the rest of the epistle presents Jesus as a believer.

In addition to these commentators, Paul Ellingworth says that ‘it is going rather beyond the language of Hebrews to describe Jesus as himself

⁷ Lenski, 426. This statement, however, contradicts an earlier assertion that ‘in his human nature here on earth Jesus depended on God in complete trust... he was like all God’s sons, living and then also dying in trust in God’ (p. 87). Unless a distinction is made between one who trusts in God and a *believer*, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how these two remarks can be reconciled.

⁸ Spicq, 2.386: ‘[N]umerous Protestant and some Catholic commentators... give to πίστις the sense of confidence (cf. II, 13, ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθώς ἐπ’ αὐτῷ; III, 2, Ἰησοῦν πιστόν) and understand that during his life on earth Christ himself undertook the struggles of faith, from his temptation in the desert to Calvary; from the beginning to the end of his life, he accepted everything in surrender to his Father’s will, and just as he learned mercy (II, 17) and obedience (V, 8), his soul lived in confidence in God; but, *Scripture never speaks of Christ as a believer*. Moreover we saw that the πίστις of XI, 1 has the sense of guarantee and certainty. It is as such that Christ would provide to the runner the infallible pledge of final success’ (italics added). Similar to the critique made of Lenski (see n. 7 above), Spicq’s previous comments (in 2.42) are not easily reconciled with his comments here.

a believer,’⁹ and Albert Vanhoye, who has been an extremely influential writer on this epistle, echoes the sentiments previously made by Spicq while also giving additional reasons for his dissent:

[P]eut-on réellement lui appliquer le titre de “croyant”? À ce propos, il convient de remarquer que *le Nouveau Testament n’attribue jamais à Jésus l’action de “croire,”* bien que ce verbe y soit employé très fréquemment (241 fois). Cela donne à entendre que la relation fondamentale de Jésus avec Dieu était d’un autre ordre. Au plus profond de son être Jésus n’était pas un simple croyant, il était le Fils uni au Père... À d’autres niveaux psychologiques, il avait des attitudes apparentées à celles de la foi, la confiance en Dieu, par exemple, ou la docilité envers son Père, mais elles étaient enracinées dans la relation filiale, et non dans la foi théologale. Jésus est à l’origine de la foi en ce sens que, par son mystère pascal, il a donné à la foi la base parfaite dont elle avait besoin. “Digne de foi” (2, 17; 3, 2–6), il est lui-même cette base. D’autre part, il porte la foi à son terme, car il donne au croyant d’entrer pour toujours dans l’intimité de Dieu.¹⁰

Once again, it is considered inappropriate to describe Jesus as a believer, since ‘le Nouveau Testament n’attribue jamais à Jésus l’action de “croire.”’ That is, Vanhoye has rejected this doctrinal position because, as Spicq suggested, the rest of the New Testament does not use the verb πιστεύω in relation to Jesus; thus, in Vanhoye’s opinion, there is no textual basis for speaking of him in this way. Aside from the fact, however, that the concept of faith can be expressed apart from the specific verb πιστεύω, Vanhoye betrays a theological bias and presupposition in saying that ‘[a]u plus profond de son être Jésus n’était pas un simple croyant, il était le Fils uni au Père.’ Without denying the uniqueness of Jesus as the Son, surely any discussion of the Son’s relationship to the Father must take seriously the (truly/fully) incarnate Son’s relationship to the Father; and, the theological tension of how the human, yet divine Son could exercise faith is not something that the NT writers seek to resolve. Further, it simply will not do to say that Jesus was not a believer in his innermost being, ‘[à] d’autres niveaux psychologiques, il avait des attitudes apparentées à celles

⁹ Ellingworth, 182. When commenting on Heb. 12.2, however, he says ‘[t]he context suggests that Jesus is understood as being himself a believer’ (p. 640).

¹⁰ Vanhoye, 91–92: ‘[C]an we really apply the title of “believer” to him? In this regard, it should be noted that *the New Testament never attributes the act of “believing” to Jesus*, although this verb is used very frequently (241 times). This suggests that the fundamental relationship between Jesus and God was of another order. In the depths of his being Jesus was not a mere believer, he was the Son united to the Father... On other psychological levels, he had attitudes related to those of faith, confidence in God, for example, or obedience to his Father, but they were rooted in the filial relationship, and not in theological faith. Jesus is the source of faith in the sense that, by his paschal mystery, he gave faith the perfect foundation which it needed. “Worthy of faith” (2, 17; 3, 2–6), he himself is this foundation. On the other hand, he carries faith to its goal, because he gives the believer entry into God’s intimacy forever’ (italics added).

de la foi.’ The NT writers never make this kind of artificial distinction and it is equally precarious to claim that Jesus’ faith-related confidence was rooted in the ‘relation filiale, et non dans la foi théologique,’ as these are not mutually exclusive categories.¹¹

In light of the inattention and skepticism regarding this aspect of christology within Hebrews, chapter two of this monograph will provide an exegetical examination of the references disclosing Jesus’ own faith and faithfulness. In some instances, this will involve analyzing passages that include the usual words for ‘faithful/believing’ and ‘trust,’ namely πιστός (2.17; 3.1–6) and πίστις (12.2),¹² but the concept of Jesus’ faith is by no means limited to these words;¹³ for this reason, the places where the idea of faith is affirmed and/or presupposed will be examined as well (2.13; 4.15; 5.7–8; 10.5–7). Excluding the latter references not only diminishes the overall picture of Jesus’ commitment to God, but it can also result in misinterpreting the former references (e.g., excluding 2.13 when trying to determine the sense of πιστός in 2.17 and 3.1–6). When all the references to Jesus’ faithfulness, i.e., steadfast confidence and active obedience, are examined, it is clear that this motif has been integrated throughout the letter by using various words and expressions, with 12.2 as the climactic testimony to his faith.

Admittedly, there seems to be a general reticence in the New Testament with respect to describing Jesus as a ‘believer,’ but it is equally apparent that Hebrews breaks this silence, beginning with an emphatic declaration of the incarnate Son: ‘I will *trust* in him’ (2.13). The author does not present him as a ‘mere believer,’ but rather as the ideal believer whom God’s people must consider and imitate (3.1; 12.3). The one who resolved to trust and obey God to the end is the same one who, by means of his perfect faith, endured a cross on behalf of God’s people (12.2; cf. 2.9). In other words, the title that is given to Jesus in 12.2 presupposes the prior illustrations of his commitment to God; in fact, the former references prepare the

¹¹ The theological rationale and justification for ascribing faith to Jesus is presented by Allen (2009), who rightly discusses how Thomas Aquinas, with his emphasis on the ‘beatific vision,’ has been influential in terms of rejecting the idea that Jesus exercised ‘faith,’ i.e., the theological virtue that is contrary to ‘sight,’ as this conflicts with the belief that Jesus, who is the eternal Son, always apprehended the divine essence during his earthly ministry (cf. pp. 41–59).

¹² For definitions/comments on the πιστ- word group, see G. Barth, *EDNT* 3.91–98; Louw and Nida, §§31.85–88; and LSJ, 1407–8.

¹³ Regarding linguistics and lexicography, see Cotterell and Turner 1989, 106–28 (esp. pp. 115–19), 145–54; and Silva 1994, 121–26, 159–69. Further, chapter three will discuss how the author uses various words in order to develop the concept of faith in general; for example, the nouns παρρησία (10.19, 35), πληροφορία (10.22), and πίστις (10.22, 38–39) prepare the reader for the definition of faith in 11.1, which also employs ὑπόστασις (cf. 3.6, 14) and ἔλεγχος.

audience to interpret 12.2 as a definite affirmation of Jesus' perfect faith, especially when considering that the contexts of the previous references emphasize Jesus' suffering of death as the event in which he exemplified faith. Therefore, as his faith(fulness) is repeatedly advanced, it is off the mark to claim that 'no NT author ever uses an unequivocal expression to indicate Jesus' faith(fulness), such as ἡ πίστις ἡ ἐν Χρῆστῳ Ἰησοῦς or anything of the sort.'¹⁴ Of all the books in the NT, the epistle to the Hebrews alone advances *and* emphasizes Jesus' faith(fulness) and the letter's distinctive voice in this respect needs to be heard.¹⁵

2. Typology and Faith

If it is true that the faith of Jesus Christ has been advanced in Hebrews, then this inevitably raises a question: what is the relation between Jesus' perfect faith and the exemplars of faith in Hebrews 11? For most, this chapter is an 'example list' designed for an exhortative or paraenetic purpose; that is, the faith-examples seek to encourage and motivate God's people to remain steadfast in the midst of their current sufferings. Since many of the faith-examples in Hebrews 11 are situated in the context of suffering, sacrifice, and death, most commentators will relate the specific stories of faith and endurance to the situation of the original audience. In other words, the prevailing opinion is that ecclesiology is the author's exclusive or overriding concern in recounting these exemplars, with the discourse displaying the author's use of deliberative rhetoric. While fully agreeing that this is one of its functions (cf. Heb. 6.11–12), is it possible that the recapitulation of faith serves, first and foremost, a christological purpose? As noted above, Jesus' faith(fulness) has been disclosed before

¹⁴ Silva 2004, 231 n. 36. This comment flows out of Silva's engagement with the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate in Paul, but based on the evidence of Hebrews, it is puzzling that he would make this claim; and, one can only suppose this is a simple oversight as he seeks to correct those who interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive.

¹⁵ While Hebrews emphasizes Jesus' faith(fulness) more than the other books in the New Testament, there are still clear examples where his faith/trust is acknowledged. In Matt. 27.43, as Jesus hangs on the cross, the religious leaders mock him and say, 'He trusts [ἐρείπει] in God, let [God] rescue him now if he desires him...' (cf. Ps. 22.8); and Luke 23.46 records how Jesus, while on the cross, cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Father, into your hands I commit/entrust [παράτίθεμαι] my spirit.' Interestingly, both verses affirm the faith of Jesus within the context of his crucifixion, which is also what 1 Pet. 2.21–24 presents; that is, Jesus suffered and bore away our sins in his body on the tree while also leaving us an example to follow, seeing as he was *entrusting* (παρεδίδου) himself to – or trusting in – the one who judges justly (2.23). Thus, even though Hebrews gives greater weight to this doctrine, it is consistent with other verses that advance Jesus' faith, especially as he suffers on the cross.

and after Hebrews 11; specifically, it is disclosed in six passages before Hebrews 11, with the final, climactic illustration of his steadfast faith following immediately after this chapter in 12.1–3. In what is essentially the conclusion to this famous tribute to faith, the author does not simply include Jesus among the great ‘cloud of witnesses’ in order to underscore his endurance of a cross on ‘our’ behalf; he also identifies Jesus as being the pioneer and perfecter of *faith*, who endured a cross for the sake of the joy set before him.

With such an emphasis placed on steadfast faith in 10.19–11.38, as well as the inclusion of Jesus among Israel’s commendable witnesses, it is natural to infer that the author is making a seamless transition from the prior examples to Jesus’ superior example of endurance *and* faith. The further implication from 12.1–3 is that the exemplars of Israel’s history were recapitulated in order to anticipate and amplify Jesus’ faith, which enabled him to look forward to the joy of enthronement and vindication and to endure the suffering and disgrace of crucifixion for the sake of God’s people. Since the discussion of faith is placed within a covenantal and redemptive-historical framework, one can appropriately say that the ‘demonstrations of old covenant faith were only incomplete anticipations of the kind of *pistis* that the “readers” have known already in their Christian lives and that finds perfection only in the Son, Jesus.’¹⁶ Regarding the figures of Hebrews 11 as those who imperfectly anticipate the faith of Christ does justice to the title ascribed to him in 12.2 and the typological character of Hebrews.

To be sure, the epistle as a whole can be characterized as typological, thereby suggesting that the author considers *all* the persons and events within Hebrews 11 to be typological anticipations of Jesus’ perfect faith and finished work.¹⁷ However, in this regard, a definition of ‘typology’ is required: typology, i.e., typological interpretation, which is distinguished from allegory and biblical prophecy, involves identifying correspondences or analogies between a person, place, event, or institution in the past (*type*)

¹⁶ Hamm 1990, 279; similarly, Lincoln (2006, 102) says that ‘the writer sees that believers need not only exhortations to faithfulness... but also models to follow. Christ’s own faith or faithfulness is the supreme example (2.13, 17; 3.2, 6; 12.2) and this faith is, of course, viewed as also anticipated in the lives of the heroes and heroines of faith (11.4–40) and in those of the leaders the addressees have known (13.7).’

¹⁷ In agreement, Hays (2009, 163) contends that ‘the exegetical strategy of Heb. 11 is typological; we are meant to read Israel’s whole story in a *figural* way as pointing forward to the reality embodied in Jesus... It is all a vast figurative narrative whose true meaning is finally disclosed in Jesus.’

and another in the present (*antitype*).¹⁸ With respect to the New Testament, typological interpretation ‘relates the past to the present in terms of a historical correspondence and escalation in which the divinely ordered prefigurement finds a complement in the subsequent and greater event.’¹⁹ Christologically speaking, what came before in the Old Testament is seen as analogous to and fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection/exaltation of Jesus. This fulfillment is situated in a covenantal and eschatological framework, so that Jesus does not merely repeat a historical precedent, but rather climactically recapitulates what took place in God’s prior dealings with his people. Thus, comparison/contrast, superiority, and finality (in a redemptive-historical context) are intrinsic to New Testament typology; and the author of Hebrews often uses this interpretive method in order to advance the supremacy of the Son and the finality of the new covenant inaugurated by him.²⁰

τύπος (8.5) and ἀντίτυπος (9.24) occur once in Hebrews (and in an inverse relationship to that described above); and the terms are used to show that Israel’s former tent and means of worship were copies and shadows of the true, permanent realities in heaven (cf. Exod. 25.40). The language and imagery, however, form part of a much larger argument, which sets out to prove that the inherently provisional and anticipatory aspects of Israel’s priesthood and sacrificial system were now fulfilled or perfected in the person and work of Christ (cf. 7.1–10.18).²¹ Through his sacrifice and victory, Jesus truly and finally expiated the sins of God’s people and has obtained a more excellent ministry that resides in the true, eternal sanctuary of heaven (8.6; 9.24). The divinely orchestrated types associated with the former covenant have reached their intended goal and fulfillment in the antitype, namely Jesus the Son. But, the typologies in Hebrews are not restricted to the use of τύπος and ἀντίτυπος. In a variety of ways, the author makes numerous comparisons in general as well as specific comparisons between Jesus and respected figures for the purpose of advancing

¹⁸ Note that typology did not originate with the NT writers, but was already present in the Old Testament (e.g., Isa. 11.15–16; 43.16–19; 48.20–21; 52.11–12; Jer. 31.30–33). Fishbane 1985, 350–79; Foulkes 1994, 342–71.

¹⁹ Ellis 1991, 106 (cf. pp. 105–9, 141–57).

²⁰ For discussions on typology in the New Testament, see Lampe and Woollcombe 1957 (esp. pp. 28–29, 34–35, 39–40, 60–64); Sowers 1965, 89–97; Goppelt 1982, 7–14; France 1982, 38–80; and Salevao 2002, 346–57; cf. remarks in Thiselton 2009, 109–14; Hurtado 2003, 570–72; and Bruce 1988, 59–63. With regard to typology in Hebrews, see Tasker 1946, 97–110; and Isaacs 1992, 68–78.

²¹ Hebrews does not speak of ‘fulfillment’ per se, but rather ‘prefers to show how the imperfect anticipated that which alone brings us to the goal, the perfect (cf. 1:1–4).’ Laansma 2008, 193.

Jesus' superior status.²² For example, apart from the general comparison that is made between the former prophets and the Son in Heb. 1.1–2, the most explicit typologies involve Moses (3.1–6), Aaron (5.1–5), and Melchizedek (7.1–28). In fact, with regard to the king/priest Melchizedek, the author evidently thought, once the Son had appeared on the stage of history, that Psalm 110 even invited a typological interpretation, especially with the declaration of v. 4: 'You are a priest forever according to the order [i.e., *likeness*] of Melchizedek.'²³ At the same time, one can see implied comparisons or typologies involving Isaiah (2.13), Joshua (4.8), and king David (10.5–7), which will be discussed in greater detail in chapters two and four of this monograph.

Therefore, when one considers that explicit references are made to Jesus' faithfulness (before and after Hebrews 11) and that comparisons or typologies are incorporated throughout the discourse, it is reasonable to conclude that the examples from Israel's history were regarded by the author as typological anticipations of Jesus' faith. This also means the author *expected* the audience to discern, to some degree, the christological typologies in Hebrews 11. That is, the necessary inference from the total presentation of Hebrews, above all, the climax of 12.2–3, is that the past exemplars were recapitulated in order to resonate with and allude to the christology of Hebrews.

To propose, however, that Hebrews 11 makes christological allusions and implied comparisons/contrasts is to go against the grain of biblical scholarship. While some scholars can be quite intentional in establishing typological connections between Jesus and Israel's ancestors, many are reluctant to identify these typologies or are critical of those who do so, mainly due to the fact that Jesus is never explicitly mentioned in the chap-

²² Cf. Heb. 1.4; 6.9; 7.7, 19, 22; 8.6; 9.23; 10.34; 11.16, 35, 40; 12.24. In each case, the comparative adjective *κρείττων* is used, meaning 'better' or 'superior.' Hebrews 1.4 and 8.6 also use the comparative form of *διάφορος* to speak of the Son's more excellent name and ministry (cf. 7.26). Other comparisons are made with *ὥς* (e.g., 3.2; 12.16), *ὥσπερ* (4.10; 7.27; 9.25), *καθώς* (11.12), *καθάπερ* (4.2), *καθὼςπερ* (5.4), *μᾶλλον* (9.14; 12.9, 25), *μείζων* and *τελειότερος* (9.11), *πλείων* (3.3; 11.4), and *χείρων* (10.29). See esp. C. F. Evans 1988; and Lehne 1990, 97–104.

²³ This point is made by Laansma (2008, 193), who insightfully recognizes that the author of Hebrews is formulating this christological typology as a result of reflecting on the *texts* of Gen. 14.18–20 and Ps. 110.4 in relation to the Son of God. To add to this observation, it would seem the author is doing something similar with his integration of Ps. 95.11 and Gen. 2.2 (cf. Heb. 3.7–4.13). That is, these texts, especially Ps. 95.11 ('They shall not enter *my* rest'), invite one to see that the land of Israel anticipated or prefigured God's true Sabbath rest (cf. Heb. 4.8–10); and, of course, Jesus, who is the new Joshua, leads God's people to this goal.

ter;²⁴ but, if Hebrews 11 is rightly read as part of a larger theological and rhetorical discourse that is concerned with ecclesiology *and* christology, then it is unnecessary for Jesus to be mentioned in order to conclude that the intent was to present the ancestors of Israel's history as typological anticipations of Christ.²⁵

3. Rhetoric and Faith

Now, as chapter three of this monograph will argue, the author further *enabled* his audience to see the christological typologies in Hebrews 11 in two ways. First, as noted, the immediate literary context reveals that the trajectory of the discourse reaches its rhetorical climax and conclusion in 12.1–3, which, consequently, forces the reader/hearer to 'consider' (12.3) Jesus' perfect example in relation to those who exhibited faithfulness in the past. Second, the structure and content of 11.1–12.3 resemble the literary form of an encomium; and, the encomiastic character of the text reveals that the ultimate subject of the author's praises is Jesus (12.2–3), the pioneer and perfecter of faith. As a result, the author is not simply praising Israel's ancestors for a paraenetic/deliberative purpose; the encomiastic character of 11.1–12.3 shows that the ancestors serve as the 'genealogy' (γένεος) of Jesus, and thus have a supplementary purpose, which is to am-

²⁴ For example, see Lünemann, 413; Riggenbach, 365; Windisch, 104; Lenski, 428; Kuss, 175; Montefiore, 200, 204; Michel, 403; Braun, 372; Wilson, 209–12; Rissi 1987, 110; Attridge, 334–35; Lane, 363; Ellingworth, 571, 604, 613; Koester, 473, 482, 492, 504; and Eisenbaum 1997, 162, 168–69; 171. Barnabas Lindars (1991) goes even further by rejecting typological interpretation completely, claiming that historical typology is 'not the method of Hebrews' (p. 54; cf. p. 125).

²⁵ *Contra* Eisenbaum (1997, 13, 187–88), who proposes that Hebrews 11 contributes to the author's agenda of denationalizing Jewish Scripture and rendering the ethnic particularity of Jewish history as 'inconsequential.' One of the problems with this thesis is that the author repeatedly highlights those who were significant for the formation of Israel as a nation (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses; cf. Tönges 2005, 101) and even refers to king David in 4.7 and 11.32. Further, Abraham, who is the patriarch and forefather of Israel's priests, is the indispensable, rather than inconsequential, point of reference for the author in terms of addressing an ethnic or genealogical concern of the original audience: although Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah (7.14) rather than Levi, he is still a legitimate, even superior, priest in the likeness of Melchizedek – the one who was 'without father or mother or genealogy' (7.3), yet also the one to whom Abraham himself paid tithes (7.4–10). As Bockmuehl (2009, 366, and n. 3) notes, Abraham paid tithes to 'the ungenealogical type of Christ... This genealogical point is among a number of arguments that should give pause to any detachment of Abraham and the other heroes of Heb. 11 from the history of Israel.'

plify, by comparison,²⁶ the superlative example of what was called the ‘queen of virtues’ and ‘the most perfect of virtues, faith’ (τὴν τελειοτάτην ἀρετῶν, πίστιν).²⁷

In Hebrews, features of deliberative and epideictic rhetoric can be identified;²⁸ yet the epideictic or encomiastic genre governs Heb. 11.1–12.3. For the first recipients of Hebrews, integrating these two forms of rhetoric in a single work would come as no surprise as this was a common practice among rhetoricians in antiquity and there was a considerable amount of overlap in these forms of oratory:

Praise and deliberations are part of a common species... in that what one might propose in deliberation becomes encomia *when the form of expression is changed*... Thus, when you want to praise, see what would be the underlying proposition; and when you want to set out proposals in deliberation, see what you would praise.²⁹

This type of integration and change in expression is exactly what we find in the epistle. Not only does the author repeatedly exhort his audience to persevere in steadfast faithfulness, but he also gives inspiring examples who exhibited this behavior in the past (cf. 6.11–15); indeed, an extensive section of praise is included and the shift from deliberation to encomia is signaled by changing ‘the form of expression’ in Heb. 11.2: ‘For by this [faith] the ancestors were *commended* [ἐμαρτυρήθησαν].’³⁰

And yet, while the saints of old are rightly commended or praised for their virtue, they clearly lead up to the one who surpasses all who came before. In this regard, Israel’s ancestors function in the same way that praiseworthy figures function elsewhere in Hebrews (e.g., 3.1–6). The only difference, of course, is that the author apparently finds it unnecessary to insert the caveat ὥς Ἰησοῦς, or a similar expression, throughout Hebrews 11 in order to establish and ensure the intended comparisons, as well as Jesus’ superiority. The unique epithet, ‘pioneer and perfecter of faith,’ conveys his unparalleled status and finally makes explicit what is implied in Hebrews 11: Jesus perfectly embodied and expressed the virtue of

²⁶ See [Aristotle] *Rhet. Alex.* 35.1440b.30–1441a.5; and Isocrates, *Evag.* 12, 70–71; *Big.* 29.

²⁷ Philo, *Abr.* 270; and *Her.* 91. Elsewhere, Philo (*Virt.* 216) calls πίστις ‘the most sure and certain of the virtues’ (τὴν τῶν ἀρετῶν βεβαιοτάτην).

²⁸ deSilva, 46–58; Koester, 81–82; Lincoln 2006, 14–16.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.35–36 (translation by G. A. Kennedy 2006, 85; italics added). In the work *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, it says ‘if epideictic is only seldom employed by itself independently, still in judicial and deliberative causes extensive sections are often devoted to praise or censure’ (3.8.15; cf. [Aristotle] *Rhet. Alex.* 5.1427b.31–34; and Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.4.14, 16; 3.7.28; 5.10.83).

³⁰ Cf. this use of μαρτυρέω in Acts 6.3; 10.22; 16.2; 22.12.

πίστις and climactically recapitulated (in his life, death, and resurrection) the faith of his ancestors.³¹

By creating, then, what is ultimately an encomium on Jesus Christ, the audience has been further enabled to compare Jesus' superior example of faithfulness with the faithful deeds of his predecessors.³² The encomiastic character of Heb. 11.1–12.3 is altogether consistent with the typological character of the epistle, particularly the author's method of comparing Jesus with famous figures in Israel's history (e.g., Moses, Aaron, and Melchizedek) for the purpose of magnifying his superiority – a method known as *synkrisis* (σύγκρισις).

Synkrisis compares representatives of a type in order to determine the superiority of one representative over another. It is a means of praising or blaming people by comparing them on topics of family, natural endowments, upbringing and education, achievements, and death. Through comparison, Hebrews shows that Christ is superior to angels, the levitical priesthood, and human worthies of salvation history. *Synkrisis* serves the Christology of Hebrews as the types of Christ are demoted or depreciated by comparison to Christ himself in order to portray him as the divine hero.³³

Moreover, the method of comparison or *synkrisis*, which characterizes epideictic literature in general, occurs not only before Hebrews 11, but also in the climax of 12.1–3, as demonstrated from the title that is attributed to Jesus in 12.2. That is, if he is held up as the perfect example of faith, then the ancestors are necessarily regarded as true, yet imperfect examples of faith in comparison to him.³⁴ In short, the author creatively used the literary form of an encomium as a further means of presenting, within a redemptive-historical framework, the Old Testament examples as typological anticipations of Christ, resulting in a discourse that amplifies (by comparison) and praises the pioneer and perfecter of 'faith' (πίστις). But, whereas the author makes explicit comparisons between Jesus and

³¹ Similar to Acts 7, which recounts (negative) events in Israel's history and then reaches its climax with 'the Righteous One,' i.e., Jesus (v. 52), it is quite possible that most members of the original audience first realized, when arriving at Heb. 12.2–3, the significance of what came before in Hebrews 11. I am indebted to Dr. Paul Ellingworth for this insight.

³² In other words, the encomiastic form of Heb. 11.1–12.3 *confirms* that 12.2 refers to Jesus' faith and specially *enables* the audience to perceive the comparative strategy of the author with respect to the virtue of faith.

³³ D. F. Watson 1997, 184.

³⁴ To regard the ancestors in Hebrews 11 as imperfect examples of faith or imperfect anticipations of Christ is not to suggest that they are inadequate representations of faith. The imperfect/perfect distinction requires that the Old Testament exemplars truly and adequately manifested the type of faithfulness that the audience was expected to imitate (cf. 10.35–11.2); but, compared with Jesus, their faith and endurance were a distant second in the race (12.1–3).

notable figures elsewhere in the letter, the typologies in Hebrews 11 are implied, perhaps as there was not enough time to do otherwise (cf. 11.32).

4. A Culturally Integrated Approach to Christology

The typological approach of Hebrews as well as the encomiastic character of Heb. 11.1–12.3 reveal that the author is drawing from two distinct cultural settings: the first is rooted in a Jewish-Christian, theological context and the second belongs primarily to the world of Greco-Roman rhetoric.³⁵ In Hebrews, typology and rhetoric are integrated in order to advance the superiority of Jesus Christ and the perfection that he has introduced on behalf of God's people. The commonality, of course, between NT typology and encomiastic rhetoric is the method of *comparison*. By comparison, the latter amplifies the superiority of an individual or group with respect to virtue and its consequent actions, and the former advances the superiority of the Son, who fulfills/completes the patterns and goals of redemptive history. The result of this integration is a highly sophisticated discourse that amplifies and praises the 'pioneer and perfecter of faith,' who is also the victorious Son at the right hand of the Father. These literary features complement one another as the author portrays Jesus as the long-awaited and faithful prophet, priest, and king of Israel, who has fulfilled what was anticipated in Israel's history. In a masterful and creative way, the author simultaneously amplifies the faith of Christ and discloses that his perfect faith has brought about the good (or 'better') things that have come to God's people, including redemption from the sins committed under the first covenant (9.15).

The following chapters will defend these conclusions, namely that the author's agenda is to magnify the person, work, *and* faith of Christ, and that typology and, especially, encomiastic rhetoric assist him in this task. The comparative strategy that characterizes both serves to impress upon the congregation that one far greater than the 'fathers' and 'elders' has come. With respect to Hebrews 11 in particular, the author reveals that the ancestors of faith have, ultimately, a christological goal. Though highly commendable (11.2, 39), they nevertheless anticipate and prefigure Jesus; and, as chapter four will show, from the entire discourse of Hebrews, one can relate the content of Hebrews 11 to the christological themes and teachings in the epistle, which are also climactically affirmed in 12.1–3. Since Hebrews 11 was never meant to be read or interpreted as a self-

³⁵ The Wisdom of Ben Sira, or Sirach, resembles Hebrews in this respect, i.e., in its review of Israel's history (Sir. 44–50), which also manifests encomiastic characteristics.

contained discourse,³⁶ it is appropriate to conclude that these examples are presented as commendable witnesses, whose faithful actions have been fulfilled, i.e., climactically recapitulated, by the pioneer and perfecter of faith. As inspiring as the ancestors may be, they pale in comparison to the one who endured the agony and shame of the cross, so that many might enter eschatological glory (2.10). By faith, Jesus opened a new way into God's presence; and, by faith, he brought Israel's history to its anticipated climax.

³⁶ In the preface to his commentary, Ellingworth (viii) even mentions that Hebrews 11 'has suffered from being read in isolation from the rest of the epistle,' but it would be more accurate to say that the chapter has suffered from being read in isolation from the epistle's *christology*; for while the relevance of the famous ancestors is often discussed in relation to the epistle's *ecclesiology* – that is, the struggle and situation of the original audience – little effort has been made to read the entire chapter in light of what is said about Christ, not to mention the faith of Christ.

Chapter 2

Jesus and Faith

Introduction

Did Jesus have faith in God? The question is provocative and, at times, divisive; however, according to this epistle, the answer is unequivocal. Contrary to the opinion of some,¹ Jesus is not only depicted as a believer, but also as the perfect example of faithfulness in word and deed. From Heb. 2.13, 17; 3.1–6; 4.15; 5.7–8; 10.5–7; and 12.2, it is evident that the author has portrayed his faithfulness in the context of his fellowship with God’s people and in relation to his apostolic and high-priestly ministries on earth, especially his sacrificial and atoning death. This is powerfully represented in 12.1–3, which is the climactic conclusion to the lengthy recapitulation of faith in Hebrews 11. After reviewing the faithful actions of Israel’s ancestors, the author says that Jesus endured a cross as the ‘pioneer and perfecter of faith’ (12.2), strongly implying that the virtue of ‘faith’ (πίστις) was the means of his endurance and perfectly displayed while suffering the shame of crucifixion; and, Jesus’ perfect example of steadfast confidence and obedience is why the audience is exhorted to *consider him* most of all (12.3).

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to support these conclusions by providing an exegesis of the texts advancing Jesus’ faith. This involves examining the use of πιστός (2.17; 3.1–6) and πίστις (12.2) as well as the passages disclosing the concepts of trust and obedience (2.13; 4.15; 5.7–8; 10.5–7). By giving a systematic examination of these texts, including the author’s use of the Old Testament, it will be established that Jesus’ own faith is not just advanced; it is, arguably, the most important doctrine in the epistle. Indeed, his superlative example of faith(fulness) is both the *model* to consider and imitate (3.1; 12.3) and the *means* by which salvation for God’s people has been accomplished. Only after this is addressed will the justification for reading Hebrews 11 through a christological lens become more apparent.

¹ E.g., Spicq, 2.386; Ellingworth, 182; Vanhoye, 91–92.

1. Trust unto Death: Hebrews 2.13

Hebrews 2.13 is the first testimony to Jesus' faith. Even though the words πίστις and πιστεύω are absent in this verse, the perfect active participle of πείθω conveys the same attitude of confidence. Quoting from Isa. 8.17,² the author writes, 'I will trust in him' (ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ).³ From the beginning of Heb. 2.12 (λέγων), however, one notices that the author did not simply say that Jesus believed or placed his trust in God; rather, he has portrayed Jesus as speaking what was originally spoken by the prophet Isaiah, resulting in a unique declaration of Jesus' faith.⁴ It is, of course, impossible to know if Jesus actually voiced these particular words of Isaiah during his earthly ministry, but it is also incidental to the author's overriding purpose, which is to show that Jesus trusted in God while sharing in the fellowship of God's people. In other words, Jesus was not exempt from living by faith. According to Heb. 2.13, Jesus entrusted himself to God (on earth) and his example is meant to encourage those struggling to persevere in faith.

Though the main idea of Heb. 2.13 is straightforward, an examination of the discourse will confirm that this statement refers to Jesus' state of humiliation; in fact, further analysis will reveal that all three declarations in Heb. 2.12–13 are presented as speech acts of the earthly Jesus, and thus they should not be regarded as statements of praise and assurance by the exalted Son. It will also be argued that the placement of the prophet

² The quotation could come from 2 Sam. 22.3; Isa. 8.17; or Isa. 12.2. The texts are identical and all communicate the speaker's trust in God during trials. Isaiah 8.17 is preferred due to the following quotation of Isa. 8.18 and use of καὶ πάλιν, which also unites the two citations of Deut. 32.35–36 in Heb. 10.30. McCullough 2005, 160–61; Docherty 2009, 165.

³ The LXX (πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ) deviates slightly from the MT (וַיִּחַיֵּתִי בְּיָדָיו) and Heb. 2.13 (ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ). In the MT, וַיִּחַיֵּתִי means 'wait for' or 'hope' (BDB, 875) and presupposes one's faith/trust, which explains the use of πεποιθὼς in the LXX (cf. LSJ, 1354; and 2 Kgs. 18.20; Prov. 16.20; Luke 18.9; 2 Cor. 1.9; 2.3). The insertion of the pronoun ἐγὼ and syntax of Heb. 2.13 may reflect the author's style or a previous *Vorlage*, but the essential meaning is unaffected. Regarding the future-perfect, periphrastic construction in Heb. 2.13, see McKay 1994, 51–52.

⁴ Spicq (2.42) says that 'ces sentiments [i.e., confidence] sont attribués par Hébr. au Christ en personne... Celui-ci proclamant sa confiance confesse par là même son indigence, et accuse ainsi sa fraternité avec les hommes « vu donc qu'il dépend de l'aide de Dieu, il a une condition commune avec nous » (Calvin). Par suite, ce n'est pas au Fils de Dieu qu'il faut penser, mais à l'homme et à l'homme éprouvé.' Spicq's distinction between the 'tested man' and the 'Son of God' is meant to clarify that Christ's *fiducia* ('trust') was associated with his humanity, not his deity (cf. Aquinas, 66, §134); but, he never reconciles this comment with his later assertion that 'jamais l'Écriture ne parle du Christ comme d'un croyant' (2.386). See the critiques by Söding 1991, 229–30; and Grässer 1965a, 60 n. 280.

Isaiah's words in Jesus' mouth was done in order to create a christological typology, i.e., to portray Jesus as fulfilling or climactically recapitulating Isaiah's example of faith by trusting in God to the point of suffering death on behalf of all.

1.1 The Spatiotemporal Perspective of Heb. 2.12–13

In the discourse unit of Heb. 2.5–18,⁵ there is a shift in focus. Having emphasized the present reign and dominion of the exalted Son in 1.3b–13, the author transitions to elaborating on the humiliated and incarnate Son. In making the transition, the author quotes Ps. 8.5–7 (cf. Heb. 2.6–8). Psalm 8, in its original Old Testament context, describes humanity in general as being the crowning achievement and glory of God's creation; however, in Heb. 2.6–8, it is used to establish that all things, including the world to come (2.5), were subjected to the Son, i.e., the 'son of man,' who was crowned with glory and honor (vv. 7b–8a). But the exalted status of the Son is minimized in the remaining discourse (vv. 9–18) in order to exploit a different part of Psalm 8, which claims he was made lower than the angels 'for a little while' (βραχύ τι, v. 7a).⁶

According to the author, we do not yet see 'all things' having been subjected to the Son of man (v. 8b), but we do see Jesus, who for a time became lower than the angels in order to taste death on behalf of all; indeed, he has been crowned with glory and honor because he *first* tasted the bitterness and suffering of death (v. 9). This point is essentially reiterated in v. 10: in leading many 'sons' to glory, it was fitting to perfect first the pioneer of their salvation through many sufferings. The author then explains why it was fitting to do so: for (γάρ) the one who sanctifies, namely Jesus (cf. 1.3; 10.10), and those who are sanctified are all ἐξ ἐνός (*from one*), and thus he is not ashamed to call them *brothers*. Though the phrase

⁵ Cf. Westfall 2005, 100–110; Übelacker 1989, 163–67.

⁶ On the use of Psalm 8 in Heb. 2.6–8, see especially G. H. Guthrie 2007, 944–48; Gheorghita 2003, 44–46, 103–7; Leschert 1994, 79–121; and Kistemaker 1961, 29–31, 81–83, 102–8.

Regarding the language of Psalm 8, Hooker (2009, 199) makes an astute observation: 'The author's interpretation of "man" and "son of man" in Ps. 8 is remarkable, although many modern translators do their best to ensure that readers of the English versions miss its significance by using politically correct terms such as "human beings" and "mortals"! To be sure, "son of man" is *not* used here as a title. Nevertheless, the *role* of the son of man is said to have been fulfilled by Jesus, who acts as mankind's representative. As such, the meaning of the term is close to what some have suggested is the way in which Jesus himself used the term' (cf. Mark 10.45; 14.62).