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The Uniqueness of Jesus Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11 stands apart as a unique section in the book of Hebrews. Whereas prior chapters focus on the superiority of the new covenant and the subsequent chapters make practical pleas, chapter 11 looks into Israelite history. However, the purpose of this historical look is not altogether different than previous chapters. The Holy Spirit is continuing to argue for the new covenant, albeit from a different position.

Faith is the focus of chapter 11. Faith is crucial to hope (1) and is the means by which we please God. That faith is made up of two components: belief and action (6 — “must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”). But in our focus on the Spirit’s argument for faith, let’s make sure we don’t miss verse 2. While brief, its impact must not be missed. At once it both previews the text and answers the possible objections of the original audience. The Holy Spirit has made clear that faith is an absolute necessity under the new covenant. However, what chapter

11 reveals is that faith was a necessary component of life under the old covenant, as well. Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Moses all exercised faith and, through that faith, found God’s approval (2,39).

Though He is rarely mentioned in this chapter (26 is the only explicit reference), Jesus is certainly pictured all throughout this text. In all that he suffered through obedience to God, Moses was said to have been experiencing “the reproach of Christ” (26). What Moses suffered, experiencing hardship from those who would not serve God, is just exactly what Jesus experienced. And, beyond that, what Moses (and the others of this chapter) experienced in their efforts to exercise faith was ultimately looking forward to an event that would make their sufferings worthwhile — the work of the Messiah (39-40). What the writer is describing is what he mentioned earlier — that the work of the Messiah was sufficient for the sins of the old covenant (9.15).

Our Savior’s work is sufficient to forgive any sin man encounters. What amazing grace is ours through faith in Jesus Christ! -TS

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