

VV STUDY NOTES: 19th March 2022

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The Writer's Penultimate "Therefore" and warning statements

Preamble

The book of Hebrews is, amongst other things, a series of arguments often interspersed with warnings following the general pattern:

Statement(s)
Therefore
More statements (if / but / so that ...)
Warning(s) (maybe)
Next statement(s)
etc.

This week we will look at Hebrews 10:26-31; 12:1-29 in which there are six "therefore" statements. This is the first section of the final argument (interrupted by chapter 11 - a diversion on the subject of faith). The second section of the final argument (chapter 13) will be the subject for next week. We will try to stick closely to the text of Hebrews rather than dodge about trying to proof-text a theme.

Background

Over the past two and a half months we have considered the writer's sequence in which s/he provides evidence that Jesus is superior to angels, superior to Moses, a superior High Priest, the mediator of a superior covenant offering a superior sacrifice. His main proposition is now complete and we are faced with the question "So What?". This week we will attempt to find answers to that question.

Texts

Read Hebrews 10:26-31; 12:1-29; Philippians 3:17-4:1
Scan through Isaiah 34, 35

Areas for Thought and Discussion

1. Two weeks ago we concluded the story of Jesus enabling our access to God in his sanctuary (10:19-23). How would you summarise the writer's warnings and instruction in 10:26-38 and the assurance given in 10:39?
2. Following the examples of People of Faith (11:1-39), what "therefore statements" and warnings do you see in chapter 12? How do you feel about the various warnings? What is your response to them?
3. What instructions do you see in chapter 12? What is your response to these?
4. What do you understand by Jesus being the "author and finisher" / "pioneer and perfecter" of our faith (12:2) ? Check out this phrase in other translations.
5. How would have felt camping in the Sinai desert as referred to in 12:21 / Exodus 19:10-22? How does "coming to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God...." (12:22-24) make you feel?
6. Hebrews 12:25-27 talks about a "time of shaking". What do you understand by this? How comfortable do you feel about it? Might this happen in your lifetime? Can one prepare for it? If so, how?
7. 12:29 refers to God as a "consuming fire". How do you reconcile this statement with 1 John 4:14-19?