

N.B.T.S.
M. Div.
Og-34

THE BLOOD THAT SPEAKS: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF HEBREWS

12:18-24 AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS

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07/0121

A Thesis in the Department of THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
Faculty of Theological Studies
Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies,
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Award of the Degree of MASTER OF DIVINITY of the
UNIVERSITY OF JOS.

2013 — 0702

JUNE, 2010.

ABSTRACT

This research work examined an exegetical study of Hebrews 12: 18-24 on the “blood that speaks” and its theological implications for the contemporary Christians. It is believed that the teachings in the book of Hebrews 12: 18-24 are still relevant to the contemporary Christians as far as the concept of “the blood that speaks” is concerned. This work employed the use of library research, where recent materials on the issue were collated at The J.C. Pool Library of The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. Also, few internet materials were used. It was discovered that the blood of Jesus is superior to that of animals as used in the Old Testament for atonement. Christ made the sacrifice once and for all, and this has theological implications for Christians. Jesus Christ and the Christian life he gives are “better” because the blessings are eternal and they give one a “perfect” standing before God. The religious system under the Mosaic Law was imperfect because it could not accomplish a once-for-all redemption that was eternal. Once men were under the terror of the law; the relationship between them and God was one of unbridgeable distance and shuddering fear. But after Jesus came and lived and died (shedding his blood for the propitiation of our sins), the God who was far distant was brought near and the way opened to his presence.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The book of Hebrews exalts the person and the work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The theme of Hebrews according to Wiersbe seems to be: "God has spoken; we have his Word. What are we doing about it?" It teaches the assurance of eternal life in a living High Priest who can never die (Heb 7:22-28). The book of Hebrews is a book of examination: it helps in discovering where one's faith really is. Studying the book must be with a purpose not to get lost in curious doctrinal details nor to attack or defend some pet doctrine but to hear God speak in Jesus Christ, and to heed that Word (Wiersbe 19).

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However, chapter 12 of the book of Hebrews (especially vv.18-24), contains the rhetorical climax of the epistle, it also contains the author's last major teaching, and his final general appeal to the readers to avoid apostasy (Ellingworth 637). Hebrews seems to be a comparative analysis of events going on in heaven and on earth (using typology of old and new covenant), the author believes in the concept of the new people of God. His central point is that the kingdom of God belongs unto believers and they will enter if they indeed believe (Schreiner 34).

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

There had been gross abuse in the application of the blood of Jesus amongst Christians, believers call 'the blood of Jesus' on just anything, when eating, when afraid/terrified, when driving/traveling, it has literarily been use as a substitute for prayer. This arose out of ignorance, it is therefore recommended that Christian leaders endeavours to have more understanding of what that blood stands for to avoid the arbitrary use and abuse of it and also embark on thorough teaching of this.

Also, there is a misappropriation of the purpose and essence of the blood of Jesus Christ by Christians, they equate it with the contemporary blood shedding, and so, skilful teaching of its purpose and essence is recommended for proper knowledge and application.

This is just a scratch on the surface as touching exposition on the passage examined, Heb.12:18-24. It is therefore recommended that further studies/work be done especially on issues where scholars held divergent opinion, for instance the last statement of the passage said "speaketh better than Abel", while some believe it referred to the blood of Abel as a person, some believe it referred to the blood of his sacrifice, others believe it referred to Abel as individual. Further studies on this and others will certainly clarify which is which.