In this book Victor Rhee explores the concept of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Although his basic assertions and conclusion remain essentially unchanged from his doctoral dissertation presented to the Department of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1996, the format and the contents of the present book are different. Parts of his dissertation have already been published in various journals and are included in this book as well. Thus, the book is the reworking of a dissertation.

After a brief introduction, Rhee provides in the first chapter three reasons why a study of the concept of faith in the epistle to the Hebrews is needed: (1) the difficulty of defining this concept in the overall context of the New Testament; (2) the same difficulty within Hebrews itself; and (3) the lack of a comprehensive treatment on faith in Hebrews. Here Rhee underlines the exception of Grässer’s work (E. Grässer, Der Glaube im Hebräerbrief [Marburg: Elwert, 1965]), but he believes that this treatment presents an inadequate view of the specific concept. He also presents the basic history of research in this subject. Rhee follows a fourfold methodology in his investigation: (1) exegesis; (2) biblical theology; (3) chiastic analysis; and (4) alternating structure of doctrine and paraenesis. Finally, this first chapter also contains a critical review of the previous traditional, patchwork, and interweaving methods of analysis of the structure of Hebrews that scholars have proposed. Although Rhee suggests that Vanhoye’s analysis is not

In the second chapter Rhee summarizes, analyzes, and evaluates different views of faith that scholars have proposed during modern times. Rhee divides these different views into three groups. In the first group there is an ethical orientation of faith. The dominant view here is that Jesus is not the content of faith. In the second group faith is viewed eschatologically. The eschatological view underlines the future aspect of faith and, according to Rhee, either minimizes or ignores the present aspect. Scholars who view faith as christologically oriented represent the third group. Rhee divides this group into two subgroups. In the first, Christ is depicted as the model of faith; in the second, the object of faith. In my view, Rhee rightly suggests that the meaning of faith depends on one’s orientation of faith in Hebrews. He rightly again argues that the dualistic view of the author of Hebrews derives from a Jewish background. In general, it seems to him most likely that the addressees were Hellenistic-Jewish Christians (154–55). Another important aspect of this study is that it does not deny the ethical view of faith. Moreover, the eschatological orientation of faith that also exists in the text is acknowledged not as a spatial but as a temporal one. Rhee’s view is that faith in Hebrews is christological and that Christ is both the model and the object of faith for believers. This is his overall consideration that he demonstrates further in the following chapters.

In the next five chapters, Rhee analyzes the concept of faith according to his outline of alternating sections of doctrine and paraenesis. Methodologically, he examines doctrinal sections first by trying to find the basis for the literary unit and then by looking for a section’s christological teaching. Paraenetic sections are likewise examined in two steps: first by looking for the basis of the literary unit and then by examining the relationship between the christological teaching in the doctrinal section and the exhortation to be faithful in the paraenetic section. Throughout these chapters, Rhee views faith as christologically oriented. After his analysis, he concludes that the concept of faith in Hebrews is both christologically and eschatologically oriented. In all these sections Christ is mainly the object of faith and cannot be separated from it. Although the famous Pauline expression “faith in Christ” is totally absent from the text, the view of faith in Hebrews is the same, according to Rhee. This conclusion leads him to suggest that the author of the epistle was a contemporary of Paul.

Finally, the eighth chapter summarizes the findings of each chapter of the book. The last chapter of the book includes useful observations about the concept of faith that involves

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moral qualities. It was really necessary to clarify here that there is no meaningful dispute in recent research concerning the characteristics of faith but a dispute concerning the nature of the qualities of faith. Moreover, after his examination Rhee concludes that many of the passages of Hebrews are chiastically arranged. This element leads him to consider the possibility that the author may have intended to write the epistle with a chiastic structuring in mind at the conceptual level (253).

In general, chiastic analyses and suggestions, which are offered, are very useful for any literary analysis of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Rhee believes that the unknown author of Hebrews used the rhetorical structure of chiasm to emphasize that the ethical elements of faith are christologically motivated. The layout of the book is very straightforward and easy to follow. An important thing that Rhee wants to show is that eschatology in Hebrews is not only futuristic but also involves a present aspect. Thus, within this context his interpretation of Heb 11 with a temporal eschatology of present and future in mind seems to fit perfectly. Another important advantage of the book is that very few Greek words are mistakenly written. The author surveys well the previous bibliography and his findings. Finally, I may say that this study supports a holistic view of faith, considering all his aspects, but I feel that the majority of interpreters will disagree with the proposed Pauline similarity.