

Title – The Constitution of the God-Man as Preached in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Program of Study – New Testament Theology

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: PowerPoint,

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Abstract: In spite of the compelling scholarship suggesting the contrary, there remains an academic quorum that believes the Epistle to the Hebrews is influenced heavily by the kind of middle Platonism that characterized the greater Hellenized world of the first century in general and Philo of Alexandria in particular. This position runs the risk of suffering deleterious implications when applied to the God-man (his office, personhood, and ministry). Any strident bifurcation between the divinity and humanity of Christ can leave one sliding toward either Docetism on the one hand or Arianism on the other. Therefore, in order to properly delineate the Christology represented in Hebrews, this argument exposes the pitfalls of assuming a pervasive philonic influence on the text of Hebrews and examines alternative philosophical influences, ultimately concluding that the nearest and most pervasive thought-background of this epistle involves the Old Testament corpus and that interpreted through a first century hermeneutic. These conclusions are then applied to the Christology of this book in an effort to demonstrate that the constitution of Christ, as preached in Hebrews, endorses a radical unity within the God-man that is contrary to the platonic dualism often foisted onto the text.

Christian worldview integration: Hebrews, while proving to be an enigma in many ways, is essential to a thoroughgoing Christology for the church. Though many details concerning the authorship and genre of Hebrews elude many scholars, one thing is generally conceded about

this important work—it is committed to encouraging perseverance among the saints as they head toward the eschaton by means of a proper understanding of Christ and his superior work. This renders the theology of Hebrews easily assessable and applicable to today's believer who is living in the same epoch as the original congregation to which this was written—the church age. Therefore, inasmuch as Hebrews involves the preacher's message to the church about Christ—a subject of exceptional significance to the entire Canon and the New Testament in particular—it is incumbent upon the student to properly delineate the God-Man for all that he is. As Hebrews is consumed with Christological considerations, misinterpreting the thought-background and philosophy behind the text from the beginning, assuming, for instance, a middle-platonist influence, suffers incredible ramifications for not only the text of Hebrews, but for one's theology of Christ. Failing to understand the influences behind Hebrews or interpreting this sermon in light of false assumptions could potentially unravel the foundation upon which believers are encouraged to stand so that they might persevere to the end. All of this lends credence to the occasion and scope of this argument which ultimately seeks to edify the Christian worldview, the cornerstone of which is Christ rightly understood and appreciated.