

## THE WARNINGS OF HEBREWS THREE AND FOUR

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### INTRODUCTION

The warnings of Hebrews have constituted a notoriously difficult exegetical quandary for exegetes. No matter whether one approaches them from a Calvinistic or Arminian perspective, difficulties abound. For the Calvinist, perseverance of the saints seems incompatible with the potential for genuinely regenerated persons to lose that grace. Yet the Arminian finds matters no easier, for although he grants the potential of loss of regeneration, he must then struggle with those passages in Hebrews that suggest that one who so apostatizes cannot ever be saved again—a discomfiting thought to any conscientious Arminian!

This paper cannot pretend to resolve all the exegetical quagmires in such matters. Instead it intends to address the major exegetical issues of Hebrews three and four and establish a framework for considering related questions. There are numerous questions that arise in these chapters. A select group of these will be considered after first summarizing the structure of the passage.<sup>1</sup>

### ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENT OF HEBREWS 3:1–4:14

This analysis assumes the overall macro-structure of Vanhoye, Lane, and Guthrie, which, though not all identical, share a high degree of similarity.<sup>2</sup> In particular, 2:17–18 is viewed as an “announcement” section that introduces the major themes that will follow. Thus the reference to Jesus as faithful high priest strikes the note for the next section. His faithfulness is addressed in 3:1–4:16, and his high priestly work is the focus of 4:14–10:39 (4:14–16 is an overlapping section).

The passage 3:1–4:16 is structured internally by a series of seven paraenetic statements: three imperatives followed by four hortatory subjunctives. The mood shift from imperative to subjunctive suggests that the primary concerns of the author are to be found in the first section with the second making application and extension of the same themes.

#### Section 1: Imperatives

- “fix your thoughts on Jesus” (3:1)
- “see to it that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart” (3:12)
- “encourage one another” (3:13)

#### Section 2: Hortatory Subjunctives

- “let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short” (4:1)
- “let us make every effort to enter that rest” (4:11)
- “let us hold firmly to the faith we profess” (4:14)
- “let us approach the throne of grace with confidence” (4:16)

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<sup>1</sup> The NIV is used as the standard translation throughout. Variations from it are the writer’s own translations unless explicitly identified otherwise. Since this article was originally written, a treatment of the same topic has appeared that contains both helpful insights as well as extensive bibliographical resources. I have not interacted with it in this article: Randall C. Gleason, “The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7–4:11,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (2000): 281–303.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Vanhoye, *A Structured Translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, transl. James Swetnam (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964); William L. Lane, *Hebrews*, Word Biblical Commentary, v. 47 (Dallas: Word, 1991); George Guthrie, “The Structure of Hebrews” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), since published as *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

The first imperative is in 3:1–6 and commands that attention be directed to Jesus. The bulk of this section following the introductory imperative describes the faithfulness of Jesus in comparison with Moses.

The second imperative occurs at the end of the 3:7–12 section. An inferential conjunction introduces the section, followed immediately by a subordinate, comparative clause quoting from Psalm 95:7–11. The command, “see to it...” follows this citation. The connection between the first and second sections (3:1–6 and 3:7–12) may be seen in the key word that links the two: πιστός (vv. 2, 5) and the negated form, ἄπιστος (v. 12). The thrust of the author runs as follows: Jesus is faithful and we ought therefore to be faithful (“hold on to our courage and hope”). Therefore (διό, v. 7), see to it that none of you are *unfaithful* (v. 12). Intervening between the conjunction and the imperative that it introduces is the comparative (καθώς, v. 7) clause (vv. 7–11) that recounts an instance of Israel’s failure on this count. The imperative of v. 12 is thus the logical conclusion from the principle of vv. 1–6, bolstered by the OT example of vv. 7–11.

The third imperative (v. 13) is a positive command designed to contrast (note the use of ἀλλά) with the second (which was negative): “but encourage one another.” A negative reason is given for this command (ὅτι μή, v. 13), followed by a positive explanation in v. 14 (γάρ). At this point the author reiterates the same OT illustration as cited earlier (v. 15; cf. vv. 7–11), adding once again his application of the OT situation to his readers (introduced with γάρ, vv. 16–19).

The first exhortation is to be careful that none be found to have fallen short of the promise of entering God’s rest (4:1). This picks up a key word from 3:18 (first mentioned in the OT quotation in 3:11) and applies the principle to the readers. The following verses (4:2–10) develop the theme of rest, leading to the second exhortation in 4:11, which again highlights the concept of rest. The two subjunctives thus form a sandwich or envelope structure:

4:1, exhortation regarding rest

4:2–10, explanation of rest

4:11, exhortation regarding rest

A brief explanatory comment follows the second exhortation suggesting a reason why God’s rest should be entered: Jesus is alive and active among his people, and to him all believers will give account (4:12–13).

The third exhortation (4:14–15) reflects the first paragraph of the section (3:1–6) and draws a practical conclusion from it: since we have a high priest (Jesus), let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. This is explained with the γάρ clause in v. 15 that describes this high priest as one who is capable and qualified. This in turn provides the basis for the fourth exhortation in v. 16: “let us approach the throne of grace with confidence.” The third and fourth subjunctives function together to express a single, complex idea just as the second and third subjunctives do.

4:14, exhortation based on the character of the high priest

4:15, character of the high priest

4:16, exhortation based on the character of the high priest

The initial contrast between Jesus' faithfulness (3:2, 5) and the potential unfaithfulness of his followers (3:12) is reflected in the last two subjunctives by the appeal to hold firmly to the faith confessed (failure to do so would result in their being ἄπιστας rather than πιστός) and by the reminder of the provision God has made for times of need—times when the danger of ἄπιστας is the greatest. This section not only recaps the introductory paragraph of the section, but also serves to introduce the following section (5:1–10:39) in which the priestly work of Jesus is emphasized. It thus functions as an overlapping section or hinge in the larger structure of the book of Hebrews.

## EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following sections will address selected exegetical issues that provide the necessary foundation for any theological conclusions that might be drawn from the passage.

### Conditional Statement (3:14)

A conditional statement plays a key role in the theology of the text: “We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first” (3:14, μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, ἔάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν). It is a third class condition which states a simple logical condition<sup>3</sup> to which no degree of probability can be assigned merely because of the grammatical form.

The conditional element should not be minimized. It is a real condition. The truth of the apodosis hinges on the reality of the protasis. Sharing in Christ depends on holding initial confidence firmly to the end. The grammar of the text does not specify whether the condition will be fulfilled, may be fulfilled, or will not be fulfilled. Any such conclusions must be predicated on other factors in the context.<sup>4</sup> A crux at this point is the identification of the elements listed in the apodosis of this condition. To that matter the next section is addressed.

### “Sharers in Christ” (3:14)

The key phrase in 3:14 is “we have come to share in Christ” (μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν). The meaning of μέτοχοι must be considered first. It is a word that is restricted almost entirely to Hebrews, where it occurs five times (1:9; 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8).<sup>5</sup> The first reference occurs in a citation from Psalm 45:6–7 in which the μέτοχοι are the *companions* of the king, over whom the king is exalted.<sup>6</sup> In 3:1 the μέτοχοι are the “holy brothers who *share* in the heavenly calling,” that is, fellow believers. Skipping 3:14 and 6:4 momentarily due to their controversial nature, the next reference is 12:8, in which the common participation of children in fatherly discipline is in view. In each instance μέτοχος may be defined as “one who shares with someone else as an associate in an enter-

<sup>3</sup> Technically: “projection by the speaker of a non-factive process” (Stanley Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek, [New York: Lang, 1993], 1:307). Note, too, that both conditional statements use *aorist* subjunctives—the unmarked, “default” form rather than the more heavily marked present subjunctive.

<sup>4</sup> James Boyer, “Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions,” *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (1982): 167–70.

<sup>5</sup> In the NT, outside of Hebrews, it occurs only in Luke 5:7; the noun form, μετοχή, occurs in 2 Cor 6:14. The related verb, μετέχω, has both a greater frequency and distribution, but also a wider range of meaning. The only occurrence in Hebrews that has a related meaning is in 2:14, describing Jesus as sharing the same flesh and blood as humanity.

<sup>6</sup> How this ought to be explained in relation to Jesus as it is applied to him in Heb 1:9 (i.e., who are Jesus' companions) is not only unclear, but is beyond the scope of the present paper. Both the OT and NT contexts are discussed at length by Murray J. Harris, *Jesus As God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 187–227. Thomas Oberholtzer addresses the identity of the μέτοχοι in this passage: “The Eschatological Salvation of Hebrews 1:5–2:5,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 88–90.

prise or undertaking—‘companion, partner.’”<sup>7</sup> It seems unavoidable that those so described in 3:14 (and probably 6:4 also<sup>8</sup>) are genuine believers, especially since the writer includes himself in the same category.<sup>9</sup>

This does not mean, however, that the commonality is soteriological. That is, the statement may not refer to sharing salvation in common (although they, in fact, do share a common salvation). Other things may be shared as well.<sup>10</sup> The word μέτοχος is modified by a genitive: τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The usual understanding of this phrase would require that the genitive be taken as an objective genitive. Thus Christ is what is shared—the believer shares in (the work of) Christ. It could, however, be a genitive of association: “sharers of Christ” could mean “sharers with Christ.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, there may be something that Christ experienced that believers also experience. In light of the probable setting of Hebrews, that something might well be suffering. Eichler would agree with this suggestion:

In Heb. the concern is above all with sharing in the sufferings and patience of Christ. The *metochoi Christou* (those who “share in Christ”, Heb. 3:14; cf. 6:4) are called upon to patient endurance in persecution and holding fast to the true faith, so that they may not lose their share in future glory.<sup>12</sup>

Suffering is a theme already introduced in Hebrews. In the preceding chapter reference has been made to “the author of their salvation [being made] perfect through suffering” (2:10). Though this refers primarily to the cross, it need not be limited to that suffering.<sup>13</sup> An emphasis on the unity between Jesus and believers is also found in that same context (2:11–13).<sup>14</sup> Also noted there is man’s fear of death (2:14–15)—something these believers were facing.

If the reference is to the persecution that faced these Christians, the writer would be exhorting them to “hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first” (4:14), for then they would be “sharers with Christ.” That they had earlier faced persecution resolutely (10:32–34) would explain the reference to their “confidence at the first.” That they were now in danger of failing to do so accounts for the warning of verse twelve and the conditional nature of verse fourteen.

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<sup>7</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT Based on Semantic Domains*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:447 (§34.8).

<sup>8</sup> This question will be addressed in a later article in this series.

<sup>9</sup> γεγόναμεν is first person plural. It is sometimes stressed that the perfect form γεγόναμεν refers to a past completed action with continuing results: we have (previously) become and consequently now are partners (e.g., Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 149, n. 49). Lane is more careful, arguing not from the simple fact of the grammatical form, but on the basis of usage in the context (“the connotation seems to be intensive,” *Hebrews*, 1:82, n. p). It is best to state only that the perfect form carries stative aspect (an existing, complex state of affairs), drawing any other implications (past event, etc.) from contextual or theological factors. In other words, γεγόναμεν simply says that the current state of the author and readers is that of partnership with no comment as to when or how that state was reached (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 245–90). Also note that γεγόναμεν is used frequently in Hebrews and is usually equivalent to ἐσμέν (Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 227). This accords well with viewing the perfect as expressing stative aspect.

<sup>10</sup> Either “spiritual” or “mundane” things may be shared under the provenance of μέτοχος. As Ceslas Spicq points out, “a *metochos* can have a share in material goods or in spiritual realities” (*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, transl. and ed. J. D. Ernest, 3 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994], 2:480).

<sup>11</sup> “Most commentators take the phrase to mean that we are ‘partakers of Christ’ (RV) or that ‘we share in Christ’ (RSV). This Pauline concept, however, is entirely alien to our author, who regards Christ not as the new humanity into whom believers are incorporated by faith-union, but as the head of the Christian family, the Son among his brothers.... [In this passage] it signifies fellow-partner” (Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries [New York: Harper, 1964], 78).

<sup>12</sup> Johannes Eichler, “Rest,” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, transl. and ed. C. Brown, 1:635–39, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–78), 1:639.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus’ suffering in temptation is also included in 2:18.

<sup>14</sup> “Μετοχοι is a special term used to identify ... the earthly suffering of Jesus with the people” (Khiok-Khng Yeo, “The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of ‘Rest’ [Καταπαυσις and σαββατισμος] in Hebrews 3:7–4:13,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 5 [1991]: 4).

## “Rest” (3:7, et al)

### *A Preliminary Survey of “Rest”*

Throughout much of Hebrews 3–4 the concept of *rest* plays a crucial role. It is first mentioned in 3:11, and the remainder of that chapter focuses on rest in the context of the wilderness experience of Israel. In chapter four the author relates this rest to his readers, referring to both God’s rest in creation and Israel’s experience to substantiate his thesis.

#### “Rest” in the Pentateuch

The way in which the author uses the various Old Testament passages is one of the perplexities of this section<sup>15</sup> as is the changing referent of *rest* in its several different uses.<sup>16</sup> The Old Testament background refers to the experience of Israel at Rephidim (renamed Massah and Meribah as a result of Israel’s testing the Lord and quarreling) recorded in Exodus 17. Yet nowhere does the writer quote directly from that account. Instead, the author of Hebrews cites David’s reference to this event in Psalm 95:7–11.<sup>17</sup>

Rest in the Pentateuch usually refers to the Sabbath<sup>18</sup> or to the Sabbath Year.<sup>19</sup> There are, however, three references in which God promises Israel rest: Deuteronomy 3:30; 12:9–10; and 25:19. In each of these instances the rest consists of peace and safety in the land of Palestine in contrast to the bondage of Egypt, the trials of the wilderness, or the battles of the conquest. It is a very physical rest (though certainly having spiritual dimensions as a blessing provided by God). Joshua 1:13–15 reiterates this promise as Israel prepares to enter the land. Following the conquest, God’s provision of rest is also a common note of fulfillment (Josh 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

In [Deuteronomy] the land is undeniably the most important factor in the state of redemption to which Israel has been brought, and on this basis the nation is to expect an additional gift from Yahweh—“rest from all enemies round about.”

We must not spiritualize any of this: this “rest” ... is not peace of mind, but the altogether tangible peace granted to a nation plagued by enemies and weary of wandering. It is also a direct gift from the hand of God. *Deuteronomy* therefore has no eschatological expectation of the kind known to the prophets. The state of salvation has been established by God by means of the covenant, and the characteristic message of *Deuteronomy* is that it still continues undiminished. The life of the chosen people in the “pleasant land,” at rest from all enemies round about, the people owing their love for God and God blessing his people—this is the epitome of the state of the redeemed nation as *Deuteronomy* sees it.<sup>20</sup>

#### “Rest” in Psalm 95

The Psalmist, however, appears to use *rest* in a different way. Although he anchors his argument by the contrast with Israel’s experience, it is not fulfillment that he sees, but lack of fulfillment. It is the experience of the wilderness

<sup>15</sup> Yeo recognizes this problem. Although he does not list all the possible solutions here, he asks, “Is the writer guilty of forcing exegesis of the old promise in the OT on the NT believers? Or is the writer allegorizing the Canaan rest into spiritual rest?” (“The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of ‘Rest,’” 2). Kaiser also poses a similar series of questions that reflect various approaches to this question. “Is he [the author of Hebrews] guilty of a forced exegesis in which he is merely accommodating the old threats and promises formerly addressed to Israel for Christian readers? Is this piece of text in Hebrews a sample of the writer’s fanciful misapplication of Old Testament texts for Christian ears and eyes? Or has he just plain allegorized the Canaan Rest into some spiritual dimension or into a symbol of heaven?” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130 [1973]: 146).

<sup>16</sup> “The writer of Hebrews never tells us what ‘rest’ means, he assumes the reader knows it” (Yeo, “The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of ‘Rest,’” 11). Kaiser would deny that there are “several different uses” of rest, preferring instead to speak of a single concept comprised of various related aspects united in corporate solidarity. His position is cited in a later note.

<sup>17</sup> The psalm is anonymous in the Psalter, but the writer of Hebrews describes the text he quotes as written a long time after the events of Meribah when God “spoke through David” (Heb 4:7).

<sup>18</sup> Exod 16:23; 23:12; 31:15; 34:4; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:14. Likewise the feast days were classified as Sabbaths in this regard: Lev 16:31; 23:24, 32, 39.

<sup>19</sup> Exod 23:11; Lev 25:4–5; 26:34–35.

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard von Rad, “There Remains Still a Rest for the People of God: An Investigation of a Biblical Conception,” *Zwischen den Zeiten* 11 (1933): 104–11; reprinted in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, transl. E. W. T. Dicken, 94–102 (New York: McGraw, 1966), 95.

generation that he reflects, however, not the period of settlement. There is thus no conflict between the fulfillment of Joshua and the failure referred to in Psalm 95. It is Israel's failure that serves as the basis of David's exhortation not to allow the heart to become hard. Although it is not explicitly stated, the implied command is to obey. This was to be the actual experience of his contemporaries, not an eschatological rest that they would anticipate but not enjoy at the time.<sup>21</sup> The only reference to *rest* is in the negative terms of God's judgment that prevented the wilderness generation from experiencing the proffered rest.

### “Rest” in Hebrews 3–4

The author of Hebrews picks up this theme of rest from Psalm 95 and develops it extensively as part of his homily. He first introduces it as a negative illustration of faithfulness. After describing Jesus' faithfulness (3:1–6a), he ends with the implied exhortation to remain faithful as Jesus was (6b). He then cites Psalm 95:7–11 as an example of those who did not remain faithful, but who instead became unfaithful by hardening their hearts and refusing to obey God. The warning becomes explicit in 3:12, “See to it that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart.” This is contrasted with the positive command to encourage one another (v. 13).<sup>22</sup> The contrasting parallels that the writer sees are as follows:

Jesus was faithful	
Believers should be faithful	
Believers should encourage one another	
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Israel was not faithful	
Israel hardened her heart	
Sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God	
Disobedient	
No rest	
Unbelief prevented entering the promised rest	

The author then turns his illustration in a totally different, almost unexpected direction by asserting that God's promise of rest still stands (4:1). Neither Psalm 95 nor Hebrews 3 made this statement. Yet rest is now said to be a promise that still stands—and one that the readers are exhorted to enter. This cannot have the same referent as the promises of Deuteronomy (3:30; 12:9–10; 25:19), for in that context the promise was of relief from oppressive circumstances (slavery and warfare) to be gained by settling in the land of Palestine.<sup>23</sup> If the statement is intended to refer to the fulfillment of a specific prophecy, it would require that authorial intent be ignored—the New Testament author reinterpreting the Old Testament by (perhaps) offering a “spiritual” fulfillment for a “physical” promise.<sup>24</sup> Since that is not an acceptable hermeneutical strategy,<sup>25</sup> another explanation must be sought. It is perhaps best to view the author of Hebrews to be applying a principle from the Old Testament event. The relationship would thus be viewed analogically.<sup>26</sup> Not every aspect of the Old Testament references needs to be included in the author's use; it is legitimate that he select a specific aspect of rest for analogous application.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> “Neither is it the eschatological expectation of God's rest among his people. The subject of this transition from disturbance to rest is still the nation, but the resting place, if we may so call it, is now different: it is God's rest. Surely this does not refer to some eschatological benefit, but to a gift which Israel will find only by a wholly personal entering into its God” (ibid., 99).

<sup>22</sup> “The psalmist used the experience of Israel under Moses to warn the Israelites of his day against unbelief and disobedience. In a similar way the author of Hebrews applies the psalmist's warning to the recipients of this epistle. The writer appeals to the readers to listen (obey) the voice of God and to exhort one another daily as a household of God, as partakers of Christ. Notice how the author here, by citing Ps 95(94), uses the experience of the Israelite generation to warn against the audience's disobedience” (Yeo, “The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of ‘Rest,’” 5).

<sup>23</sup> “The concept of *κατάπαυσις*, ‘rest,’ in the context of the promise to the Exodus generation had the local connotation of entrance into Canaan, where Israel would experience relief from turmoil and security from their enemies” (Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:98).

<sup>24</sup> See the comment in this regard by von Rad cited above.

<sup>25</sup> This was discussed in the previous article in this series: “The Intentional Structure of Hebrews,” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4.2 (2000): 80–81, n. 2.

<sup>26</sup> An alternate possibility is that the writer is using the OT text typologically. The validity of that will depend largely on whether there is an escalation of meaning involved. Whether that is the case will depend on how *rest* is defined. Glenny summarizes the four elements necessary for a legitimate type (he prefers the designation “typological-prophetic association,” following

### *Proposed Interpretations for “Rest”*

At this point, the meaning of *rest* as the author of Hebrews uses it in chapter four becomes important. If it does not refer to settling in Palestine, what does he intend his readers to understand? Explanations that have been offered include<sup>28</sup> eternal life<sup>29</sup> in heaven (i.e., salvation), eschatological kingdom rest,<sup>30</sup> and blessings in this life (i.e., the Christian experience of fellowship with God).<sup>31</sup> Arguments that have been offered in defense of the first two of these options will be summarized here. The third will be defended in the next section.<sup>32</sup>

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Bock): “1. The Old Testament type must be based on ‘historical facts . . .,’ not hidden meanings. . . . 2. The link between the type and the antitype must be identifiable in Scripture. 3. A pattern or correspondence must exist between the Old Testament type and the New Testament antitype. 4. There must be an escalation or heightening from the Old Testament type to the greater New Testament antitype” (W. E. Glenny, “The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. C. Blaising and D. Bock, 156–87 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 157–58). The key factor in classifying *rest* is the fourth; the other three would fit the definition.

<sup>27</sup> See von Rad, “A Rest for the People of God,” 100.

<sup>28</sup> Only the three most common conservative views have been included here. In addition, Harold Attridge notes the following (nonconservative) speculations: “‘Entry into rest; has thus been seen, in terms of political eschatology, as the liberation of the new Israel from foreign oppression, or in terms of other apocalyptic imagery, as entry into the eschatological temple, or in more metaphysical terms, as entry into the heavenly spiritual world or the Gnostic Pleroma’” (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989], 128).

<sup>29</sup> “The ‘rest’ is primarily soteriological regarding its reality and eschatological in respect of its fulfillment. An exclusive realization of faith becomes definite when man existentially and totally comes to ‘rest’, peace and security in Jesus Christ through rebirth and repentance” (H. A. Lombard, “Καταπαυσις in the Letter to the Hebrews,” *Neotestamentica* 5 [1971]: 69). Lombard finds this definition in the “symbolized deep meaning” of the Old Testament, interpreted in terms of *Heilsgeschichtlich*: “the obedient people shall receive from God the ‘rest’/release from God’s holy wrath.” This is *Heilsgut* (fruit of salvation) and “is not historically grounded” (ibid., 69, 65–66). Apart from the neo-orthodox undertones suggested in the preceding comments, Bruce’s position is similar in that he understands rest to refer to the believer’s enjoyment of eternal life in heaven. “This blissful rest in unbroken fellowship with God is the goal to which His people are urged to press forward; this is the final perfection which has been prepared for them by the sacrifice of their heavenly high priest” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 79). Philip Hughes would agree with Bruce. “The labors from which the people of God rest in the heavenly sabbath are the toilings, trials, and tribulations of their present pilgrimage; otherwise the sabbath rest will be for them an eternity of joyful service and unclouded worship performed to the glory of him who is their Creator and their Redeemer” (*Hebrews*, 161–62). Attridge is in the same category, though he defines it in sacramental terms. “The imagery of rest is best understood as a complex symbol for the whole soteriological process . . . which involves both personal and corporate dimensions. It is the process of entry into God’s presence, the heavenly homeland. . . , the unshakable kingdom. . . , begun at baptism. . . , and consummated as a whole eschatologically” (*Hebrews*, 128).

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Toussaint explains that it is “the promised rest which actually is God’s rest which comes to man in the millennium” (“The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews,” *Grace Theological Journal* 3 [1982]: 74). In a similar vein Walter Kaiser sees a singular, corporate solidarity theme of *rest* that culminates in the millennial kingdom: “From the initial divine rest inaugurated at creation to its final realization once again in that millennial reign of the world’s new sabbath with the intervening periods of proleptic entrance by faith and the momentary inheritance of Canaan by Israel, it is all one piece; a single divine rest with related aspects” (“The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest,” 149). He appends the note that “the rest of God . . . is still future to us in our day” (ibid.). Other scholars use eschatological terminology, but without the millennial connotations of the writers just cited. Often this is combined with a present view of entering this eschatological rest. As one example of this position, see Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:98–99.

<sup>31</sup> Representative of this position is W. H. Griffith Thomas. “The predominant thought is . . . rest of heart through surrender and obedience. . . . The primary idea is concerned with the present and not with the future, with the believer’s life here and now. . . . No doubt the future cannot be excluded, but we must take great care to concentrate attention on the present. It is a rest from striving, a rest through believing, and refers to the attitude of the soul toward God. . . . This means . . . harmony of soul within which produces loyalty of character and conduct; and just as God ceased working after Creation, so also, when we enter into spiritual rest, we cease from our striving, because, as our attitude is one of confidence in God, we are in harmony with His will. This is the Christian life, which we ought to enjoy, and it is this which, under the form of rest in this passage, is the great theme of the entire Epistle. . . . The whole passage has reference mainly, and almost exclusively, to the need of the believer realizing to the full the present privileges and possibilities of his Christian position” (*Hebrews: A Devotional Commentary* [1924; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 48–50, *passim*).

<sup>32</sup> The specific form in which this position will be defended will be somewhat different from that argued by Griffith Thomas, especially as it relates to placing these warnings in their historical context (something seldom done in such discussions), but the similarity will be obvious.

The first position is seldom argued in any rigorous way. It appears to be assumed in many cases. Toussaint summarizes the two basic elements on which that assumption is based. “First, the *promise* of entering that rest (4:1) implies that the blessing is a future one (cf. 4:11). Second, the heavenly estate described in Rev 14:13 refers to rest.”<sup>33</sup> In response, it may be noted that a reference to a promise need only be future from the original offer. It is a non sequitur to assume that it must be still future at a later time or that it can never be experienced presently by anyone (else how would a promise ever be fulfilled?). The exhortation to “make every effort to enter that rest” (4:11) would seem to argue to the contrary that it is something that *could* be experienced in the present life of the readers. The argument from Revelation 14, while it might supplement the explanation of Hebrew 3–4, does not prove it. In other words, the comparison of the two texts would be valid only when the identity of rest in Hebrews 3–4 had been established. The use of the same word in two passages does not establish identity of referent.

The second interpretation, eschatological kingdom rest, has been argued more rigorously. This has probably been necessary to justify the position since it is a minority view. Toussaint gives seven arguments in defense of this view (which he holds).

First, in Heb 4:1, the *promise* to enter God’s rest remains for those who receive it. The *Promise* implies that it is futuristic in application.

Second, Psalm 95 ... is an enthronement Psalm.... The “rest” of Psalm 95 must therefore anticipate the millennium.

Third, the concept of σαββατισμός (Heb 4:9) was used in Jewish literature to refer to the kingdom age....

A fourth factor [is that] the OT refers to the kingdom age as being a time of rest....

Fifth, the “rest” spoken of in Psalm 95 clearly involved Israel’s dwelling in the land; therefore, the promised rest can scarcely be divorced from settlement in the land.

Sixth, Heb 4:8 speaks of another prophetic “day.” This clearly is a *period of time* and is explained in 4:9 as the Sabbath rest.

Seventh, the rest was prepared from the foundation of the world (Heb 4:3–4) just as the kingdom was (Matt 25:34).<sup>34</sup>

These arguments may be answered as follows. The first argument is the same as one used for the previous position (see above). Second, it does not appear adequately established that Psalm 95 is an eschatological, kingdom psalm and that therefore the rest referred to there must be eschatological, kingdom rest. The only support for this conclusion is that the surrounding psalms are eschatological (Psalms 93–100). Even if this were a valid statement (and it may well be correct), it would not require that Psalm 95 also be eschatological. If the Psalm is examined on its own, there does not appear to be exegetical evidence that suggests the conclusion that it is eschatological. A reference to God as “king” certainly does not prove it, for his kingship is not limited to a future millennium.<sup>35</sup>

Third, σαββατισμός is not used in extant Greek literature prior to Hebrews and is used only a few times in later literature.<sup>36</sup> Jewish usage cannot, therefore, form a valid background for an argument in this text.<sup>37</sup> Even if it were used as Toussaint suggests, Jewish usage would still not necessarily be determinative of its use here.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Toussaint, “The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews,” 71.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 72–73.

<sup>35</sup> It is curious that Toussaint considers the classification of Psalm 95 as an enthronement psalm by a non-conservative, non-premillennial scholar to substantiate his conclusion. That is certainly not what Christoph Barth intended by his classification (*ibid.*, 72, n. 14). Kaiser’s article (which Toussaint cites, *ibid.*, 73) provides a more extensive discussion of this position, but the argument still hinges on the surrounding psalms, not on exegetical mandates from Psalm 95 itself (“The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest,” 142–43). Oberholtzer’s argument is essentially the same (“The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 [1988]: 187–88).

<sup>36</sup> Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 255. Whether the word was coined by the author of Hebrews cannot be determined, though that is possible.

<sup>37</sup> Hughes speculates that it “was current in Hellenistic Greek, and particularly in Jewish or Jewish-Christian circles” (*Hebrews*, 160, n. 67). This is entirely speculative, however, and has no historical data to support it. The earliest use of σαββατισμός in the sense in Toussaint claims is the second-century Epistle of Barnabas, which allegorizes the seven days of creation into the seven thousand year history of the world, the seventh, sabbatical era is the millennium (*ibid.*, 161). This view of history is neither desirable nor helpful in defending an eschatological Sabbath rest in Hebrews 4.

<sup>38</sup> It might be a more significant argument if Toussaint argued on the broader basis of σάββατον and related concepts rather than the hapax σαββατισμός. Perhaps this is what he intended, but the statement as it stands is invalid for the reason noted above. Attridge does cite several apocalyptic Jewish sources that use a rest image to describe eschatological expectations (*Hebrews*, 126, n. 52).



The fourth argument is possible, but not determinative. The Old Testament references cited would be appropriate only if *rest* were never used of any other rest. Since this is not the case (the promised rest in Canaan following the conquest is the obvious alternative use), the relevance of these texts may not be simply assumed (as Toussaint does) but must be demonstrated.

Fifth, tying the rest of Psalm 95 to the land is problematic in that Israel was in possession of the land at the time David speaks of the potential of rest. His use of rest is not at all “clearly” territorial. It would also seem odd to insist on this association in Hebrews 3–4, for it would imply that the *church* may anticipate landed provisions as part of the proffered rest.

Sixth, it might be asked why Toussaint insists on a reference to “another *prophetic* ‘day’” (emphasis added). Since the text does not make that specification, it assumes the eschatological-rest conclusion rather than establishing it. Moreover, insisting that this prophetic day “clearly is a *period of time*” implies that this time is in contrast to a previous period of time. To what period of time does this refer? Particularly, what is the end point of the previous period? Since that is an unanswered question, at least so far as any biblical data is concerned, it might suggest that the writer does not intend to contrast two specific periods of time, but rather refers to a condition or state. The only support that Toussaint offers for this otherwise assumed statement is that it is “explained in 4:9 as the sabbath rest.” But this does not necessarily refer to a specific period of time; σαββατισμός may also refer to a condition or state.

Seventh, the mere occurrence of the phrase “from the foundation of the world” does not demonstrate identity. Seven times in the New Testament ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου occurs; not all of these texts refer to the kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

### *Preferred Interpretation of “Rest”*

Since no other passage speaks of “entering his rest” (at least in a positive sense<sup>40</sup>) the definition must come primarily from Hebrews 4:1–11. The characteristics or descriptions of *rest* in these chapters are as follows.

- The promise is still available, 4:1
- A believer<sup>41</sup> can fall short of it by disobedience, 4:1, 11
- It may be abdicated by disobedience or lack of faith, 4:2, 6
- It is not the same as that obtained under Joshua, 4:8
- It may also be referred to as a “Sabbath” for the people of God, 4:9
- It involves resting from one’s own work, 4:10

Before these factors can be formed into a definition, verse two needs to be examined. Reference is made there to both the gospel and to faith. This is a statement that might be taken to define *rest* as salvation, particularly if the common technical definition of *gospel* is assumed. In Hebrews, however, the noun εὐαγγέλιον is not used at all, and εὐαγγελίζω appears only twice (as a participle both times): 4:2, 6. The first reference is to the reader’s own reception of a message; the second refers back to the wilderness generation. In neither instance is the word connected with the death of Jesus. Since εὐαγγέλιον can be used in both a technical sense (what a person must believe to be saved; e.g., 1 Cor 15:1–4) and in a non-technical sense (“good news” or simply “announcement”; e.g., Rev 10:7; 1 Pet 1:25), the technical meaning should not be assumed without question. Nor does the reference to faith in this verse demand (or even suggest) that the reference must be to saving faith in the gospel message. Elsewhere in Hebrews πίστις refers, not to saving faith, but to the believer’s life of faith—relying on God throughout the time spent on this earth.<sup>42</sup> “This ‘good news’ is the promise of entering His rest. The ‘good news’ given to the readers paralleled that announced to the Exodus generation—the prospect of entering God’s rest.”<sup>43</sup>

The following interpretive paraphrase may reflect the best conclusion: “we have had the good news of the rest that God offers announced to us just as the wilderness generation did, but what they heard did not profit them because, instead of trusting God, they disobeyed and rebelled against his instructions.”

<sup>39</sup> Matt 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8.

<sup>40</sup> Ps 95:11 speaks of not entering God’s rest, but that is the same passage as is quoted in Heb 3–4.

<sup>41</sup> This assumes that the readers are, indeed, believers. The statement does not demand either eternal or conditional security, though obviously the implications of the statement will be quite different depending on how one answers that question.

<sup>42</sup> E.g., 6:12; 10:22; 11:1–40; the verb πιστεύω is used only twice (4:3; 11:6) and *may* refer to saving faith in 4:3 (but probably not); the adjective πίστος means *faithful*, *dependable* and is used only in reference to Moses, Jesus, and God in Hebrews.

<sup>43</sup> Oberholtzer, “The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13,” 192.

Verse three also raises questions, particularly in regard to the tenses used in the first part of the verse: εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες. By rearranging the word order for clarity in English, the translation options may be tabulated as follows. (Some theoretical options are included even though they are improbable in the present context.)

γὰρ οἱ πιστεύσαντες	εἰσερχόμεθα	εἰς κατάπαυσιν
for we who have believed	are entering	into rest
	enter	
for we who believe	will enter	into the rest
for we who will believe	will be entering	into that rest

The differences in the third column are negligible. The aorist participle in the first column and the present tense verb in the second are more difficult, however. More traditional grammatical assumptions that connect tense forms with time would probably prefer the first option above. This would suggest that believing precedes the entering and that the entering is a present time reality that is in progress. More recent grammatical study has concluded that the significance of tense forms in Greek is verbal aspect (i.e., Greek does not grammaticalize time).<sup>44</sup> From this perspective the aorist form grammaticalizes perfective aspect: the action is described as a whole without respect to its beginning, progression, or culmination. The present form carries imperfective aspect, which describes the event from within as in progress. This would suggest that the aorist adjectival participle is best represented in English as “we who believe” and the verb as “entering” (without at this point specifying a time that it takes place).<sup>45</sup>

A second question in verse three is the meaning intended by πιστεύω. Does it refer to initial, saving faith or is it a reference to the believer’s ongoing life of depending on God? It was suggested above that Hebrews normally uses this word group in the second sense. If that is true here, it would be better to translate it as “the ones who trust [God]” rather than “the ones who believe.”<sup>46</sup> The comparative clause in the second half of the verse would seem to substantiate this conclusion since the writer compares his statement about the present participation in rest with the failure of the wilderness generation. Although it is probably true that many of that generation were not believers, that is not the point being made in either Psalm 95 or Hebrews 3–4 in reference to this passage. In its context, the emphasis is on the lack of obedience and their failure to trust God’s promises of rest in the land.<sup>47</sup>

The net result of the individual conclusions summarized in the preceding paragraphs would argue strongly for a definition of *rest* that is related to the believer’s present experience of trusting God. Salvation is ruled out as the explanation of *rest* because the writer already has assumed that condition. The imperfective aspect of *enter*, the use of πίστις in Hebrews, and the parallel of the Old Testament illustration combine to support this conclusion. When the descriptions of *rest* summarized above are incorporated, it would appear that *rest* refers to the faithful, obedient relationship that believers should have with God—a relationship that enables the enjoyment of God’s blessings. This use of *rest* by the author of Hebrews is directly analogous to the experience of the wilderness generation. They did not trust God nor obey him and consequently failed to enter this kind of relationship. It would be inappropriate to describe this as a typological use because there is no escalation in the meaning of the Old Testament. As the Israelites should have trusted God, *even so* Christians should trust God.

<sup>44</sup> Porter, *Verbal Aspect* and Rodney J. Decker, *Temporal Deixis in the Gospel of Mark in Light of Verbal Aspect*, *Studies in Biblical Greek*, v. 10 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> Lane, although he uses more traditional terminology, combines an eschatological understanding of rest with an emphasis on translating this phrase as a “true present”: “The bold assertion εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ‘for we do enter that rest,’ implies more than proleptic enjoyment of what God has promised. The present tense is to be regarded as a true present and not simply viewed as future in reference. God’s promise is predicated upon reality, and believers are already to enjoy the rest referred to in the quotation of Ps 95:11” (Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:99).

<sup>46</sup> This makes a somewhat arbitrary distinction for convenience: *faith* is taken in an initial soteristic sense; *trust* refers to depending on God subsequent to salvation.

<sup>47</sup> In substance, the contrast “is between listening, believing, obeying, and holding fast on the one hand, and the failure to do so on the other” (Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 254).

## CONCLUSION

If the definition proposed for *rest* in the preceding paragraphs is valid, then a number of difficulties in the chapter are much more easily resolved. It is the assumption that these two chapters are talking primarily about soteriological matters that has created difficulties where none need exist.<sup>48</sup> The description of turning away from God (3:12) does not refer to an individual who forsakes his faith and becomes an unbeliever once again. It refers, rather, to those who fail to trust God in their Christian experience and who become disobedient. In such a condition, the believer fails to experience God's rest—the relationship of trusting obedience that enables the enjoyment of God's blessings. This sinful, unbelieving heart (3:12, 19) is not an unregenerate one, but one characterized by disobedience and a lack of faith in God's daily provisions. Just as Israel failed to experience God's blessings and his abundant provision or rest, so the disobedient Christian encounters the same frustration. Falling (4:1, 11) is not falling from grace (in the Arminian sense of that phrase) but is, as 4:1, 11 clearly explain, a falling from the place of rest that occurs when a believer follows the example of disobedience of the wilderness generation. "The readers of Hebrews were not being threatened with soteriological loss any more than were the wilderness generation."<sup>49</sup>

The conditional nature of being a sharer of Christ (3:14) relates not to salvation ("share in Christ") but to trusting him for the grace needed to face persecution and suffering ("share with Christ"). A Christian who does not stand up under the pressures of persecution is still a Christian, but he is no longer a μέτοχος with Jesus in his sufferings. It is not necessary to introduce the idea of rewards into this passage as that which is conditional or which may be lost.<sup>50</sup> Such matters may be true, but they are foreign to the focus of Hebrews 3–4.

These warnings are therefore warnings to genuine believers who are in danger of denying Christ. If the probable setting of this letter is recalled, the reason for the warning is quite clear.<sup>51</sup> As explained in the first article in this series, this homily was probably originally written for a small house church in Rome that lived in the shadow of Neronian persecution. Despite their earlier perseverance under the persecution of Claudius, they now evidenced signs of giving up—of forsaking the rest they enjoyed by not trusting God to provide for them in the furnace of persecution that was currently being stoked. If they were now to disobey by turning away from the living God (3:12), perhaps by verbally denying Christ to save their life when they stood before the Roman tribunal, they would abdicate the rest they had thus far experienced.

The author of Hebrews stated that being a partaker of Christ is conditioned on "holding fast" to one's confidence (3:14b). Elsewhere he recalled earlier days in which the readers had demonstrated their confidence (10:32–39). Because of the present persecutions they were beginning to lack endurance.<sup>52</sup>

"Our writer regards this not as a distant danger, but as a present possibility."<sup>53</sup> The result of their doing so would be parallel with that of the wilderness generation: loss of blessing and discipline by God in this life.<sup>54</sup> In an attempt to deter this looming danger, the preacher of this homily writes "to extend to his hearers a serious call to persevering discipleship."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Although Oberholtzer's understanding of the nature of rest is different from that of this writer, he concurs with this assessment. "The topic under consideration is not soteriological. The writer did not say that the people rejected Christ and would be cast into hell; he simply spoke of a 'falling away.'" He identifies this falling away with "withdrawal from service"—which, though different in the particulars, is very similar to the position argued in this article ("The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13," 189).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Oberholtzer includes this as part of his eschatological kingdom rest position (ibid., 194).

<sup>51</sup> "The Original Readers of Hebrews," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 3.2 (1999): 20–49.

<sup>52</sup> Oberholtzer, "The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13," 189.

<sup>53</sup> Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 79.

<sup>54</sup> Oberholtzer concurs with this statement, but goes on to add the (unnecessary) element of the discipline also entailing loss of eternal reward ("The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13," 195).

<sup>55</sup> Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:90.

## APPENDIX: “GOD’S HOUSE” (3:6)

The house metaphor is the background theme of 3:1–6. *House* occurs six times in these verses, four times referring to *his house* (vv. 2, 5, 6).<sup>56</sup> There is a three-level analogy (Jesus, Moses, we) developed using this term, each one depicting the relationship between a superior and a subordinate.

Jesus	faithful to	the one who			2
		appointed him			
Moses	faithful in all	his (= God’s)	house	as a servant	5
Christ	faithful over	his (= God’s)	house	as a son	6
we	are	his (= God’s)	house		6

The *house* is not identified more explicitly in this context. The implication of the analogy is quite clear: as Jesus and Moses were faithful (πιστός), so “we” should be faithful. This thought is developed in the remainder of the chapter as the writer warns his readers not to be found unfaithful (ἀπιστός). The referent of *we* traces to 3:1 and includes not only the writer but also the “holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling” and who together with the author confess (ὁμολογία) Jesus. They are, therefore, believers. The same analogy recurs in 10:21, this time using the more explicit phrase *God’s house* (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ). In that passage the word *we* also clearly identified *brothers* (10:19). The house analogy is explicitly connected with the present status and experience of the readers.<sup>57</sup>

Jesus	great priest over	God’s	house	10:21
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*House*, though not a technical term, should probably be identified as equivalent to the phrase *people of God*. Not only are both familial analogies, but the scope is the same: the house over which Moses was faithful was the covenant nation of Israel; the house over which Jesus is faithful includes both Israel and the readers of Hebrews. Assuming that the author addresses his readers as Christians, it could be said that the house includes both Israel and the church—two corporate<sup>58</sup> entities in covenant relationship with God (based on the old and new covenants, respectively).<sup>59</sup> *House* is not a directly soteric term here (not all Israelites in covenant relation to God were regenerate), but a covenantal one. Its use in relation to the church *does* refer to a group defined in soteric terms, not because *house* is a soteric term, but because participation in the new covenant is presently possible only through soteric relationship with the mediator of the covenant.<sup>60</sup> This idea is not foreign to the context, for the author of Hebrews uses the technical term, *people of God* in 4:9.

<sup>56</sup> The expression *house of God* does not occur in the original text, the reference there always using the pronoun *his*. The antecedent, however, is clearly God, thus justifying the practice of several English translations (NIV, NRSV) for making this explicit. (The NASB and NKJV capitalize *his* to indicate the reference to God.)

<sup>57</sup> The conditional (or perhaps causal) participle (ἔχοντες, 10:19) predicates present confidence and the contemporary ministry of the great priest (10:19–21) as the basis for the exhortation to draw near (10:22).

<sup>58</sup> The referent of the plural *we* (ἡμεῖς, v. 6) should probably be taken in a corporate sense. That is, it refers, not to individual believers, but to the church corporately. The writer does not use ἐκκλησία of the church in the entire homily (with the possible exception of 12:23, ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων). Non-technical terms (such as *house*) are normally used instead. Including both Israel and the church under the umbrella terms *house* or *people of God* does not result in a confusion or identification of the two, for both remain separate, distinguishable entities in the outworking of God’s purposes.

<sup>59</sup> Homer Kent also includes both Israel and the church under the common designation *house* in this passage, though he makes it a soteriological relationship (“household of faith”) rather than a covenantal one (*The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972], 67).

<sup>60</sup> The positions assumed here in regard to the new covenant and the people of God are defended in this writer’s articles: “The Church’s Relationship to the New Covenant,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (1995): 290–305, 431–456; “New Covenant, Theology of;” “New Covenant, Dispensational Views of;” and “People of God” in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 278–80, 280–83, and 297–300; and “People and Covenant,” unpublished postgraduate seminar paper, Central Baptist Seminary, Minneapolis, Jan. 1995. The identification of *God’s house* and *people of God* as equivalent terms does not necessitate the exact position assumed here, though different conclusions in those areas might result in slightly different wording of the relationship.