Surgical
Hebrews 4:11-13
Dr. Pierre Cannings

Introduction:

Background:

The parenetic unit begun in 3:7 is brought to a brief and vigorous conclusion in vv 12–13, where the writer provides the supporting reason for the diligence enjoined in v 11

God's word, whose sanctions were imposed so effectively upon the Exodus generation, is performative today and confronts the Christian community with the same alternatives of rest and wrath

The point of the author would be this: although the exodus generation failed to enter rest, Christians will succeed because of the work of Jesus, the Logos, in their lives. The use of *zōn* ("living") to qualify "word" implies personality

But this is not the whole story. The author's goal is to inspire faithfulness in the Christian community today. Hebrews 4:9 is attempting to stir believers on to serve the Lord faithfully while still on the earth

The use of *gar*, "for," serves to indicate the reason for seeking to enter God's rest: nothing escapes God's notice and he will judge unbelief

Hebrews 4:12–13 can still be read as an amplification of the warning in 4:11

The lesson he had just taught from the Old Testament Scriptures was not a mere historical tale. Instead, as had already been made clear by much he had said, it was powerfully relevant to his audience

Body:

I. The Scalpel

a. Word of God
    i. Word- Ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is found only here and in 13:7, where it clearly refers to the Christian message. In the present, largely nonchristological context, a wider reference is probable, namely to God's warnings to his people throughout OT and NT times (cf. v. 11). The genitive is subjective: not a message about God, but one spoken by God

1. The clear allusion to the folly of Israel at Kadesh in disregard of God's oath and the warning of Moses (Num 14:43) indicates that the expression ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, "the word of God," must have specific reference to the text of Scripture cited so extensively in 3:7–4:11, and especially to Ps 95:7*b*–11. This needs to be affirmed in the presence of a persistent desire to find in v 12 a personal reference to Jesus as the Logos
2. Sacrificial associations have been suggested for μάχαιρα in Lk. 22:38, as certainly in Gn. 22:6, 10, but in the present context the meaning is rather that of God's power, through his word, to examine, to judge, and if necessary to destroy the guilty. The image of a knife is more appropriate to the idea of probing, which is directly expressed in the text; the traditional translation "sword" expresses the underlying thought of divine judgment.
3. The word of the living God (3:12; cf. 9:14; 10:31) is itself living (Dt. 32:47; Is. 55:11; Jn. 6:63, 68; 7:38; 1 Pet. 1:23).
4. The word of God is personified. However, the majority patristic and medieval view that the phrase refers to the Son, as in Rev. 19:15, 21 (but not Eph. 5:17), has no support either in the immediate context here, nor in the epistle as a whole. The word of the living God (3:12; cf. 9:14; 10:31) is itself living (Dt. 32:47; Is. 55:11; Jn. 6:63, 68; 7:38; 1 Pet. 1:23). to Ps 95:7*b*–11
5. The majority of the church fathers and medieval theologians saw it as referring to Jesus the Son. Since the Reformation, the phrase has usually been interpreted as the written Word of God. In this latter interpretation, the genitive is subjective and the reference includes both Old and New Testaments. Lane noted "the word of God" must have specific reference to the text of Scripture extensively cited in 3:7–4:11, especially Ps 95:7–11
6. While this specific text is certainly included, it would seem that the phrase cannot be restricted to this, but given the immediate and broader context of the entire epistle, must include God's spoken or written word, including his word expressed through Jesus.
7. God speaking, and speaking in words which are charged with doom and promise (3:7f.). The revelation, however, is broader than the scripture; it includes the revelation of God's purpose in Jesus (1:1f.). The free application of ὁ λόγος (τοῦ θεοῦ) in primitive Christianity is seen in 1 P 1:23f.; Ja 1:18f., quite apart from the specific application of the term to the person of Christ (Jn 1:1–18). Here it denotes the Christian gospel declared authoritatively by

men like the writer, an inspired message which carries on the OT revelation of God's promises and threats, and which is vitally effective

ii. Living

iii. Active - **to practical expression of capability, *effective, active, powerful***

1. The general meaning is clearly that the active power of God's word reaches into the inmost recesses of human existence, to lay bare and judge. A positive counterpart to this idea may be found in 10:19–25.
2. Ἐνεργής, here as in 1 Cor. 16:9, has the active meaning "effective, powerful,"
3. The general meaning is clearly that the active power of God's word reaches into the inmost recesses of human existence, to lay bare and judge. A positive counterpart to this idea may be found in 10:19–25.

iv. Sharper

v. Two Edged Sword

1. When the past generation sought to contravene the oath of God and to enter Canaan, they were driven back and fell by the sword (μάχαιρα) of the Amalekites and the Canaanites (Num 14:43–45). The word of God poses a judgment that is more threatening and sharper than any double-edged sword (μάχαιρα, v 12) because it exposes the intentions of the heart and renders one defenseless before God's scrutinizing gaze
2. Double sided - figuratively; always with μάχαιρα or ῥομφαία. Both expressions express the weapon's effectiveness
3. Sacrificial associations have been suggested for μάχαιρα in Lk. 22:38, as certainly in Gn. 22:6, 10, but in the present context the meaning is rather that of God's power, through his word, to examine, to judge, and if necessary to destroy the guilty. The image of a knife is more appropriate to the idea of probing, which is directly expressed in the text; the traditional translation "sword" expresses the underlying thought of divine judgment
4. figuratively; always with μάχαιρα or ῥομφαία. Both expressions express the weapon's effectiveness;
5. The personifying of the divine **λόγος,** in a passage which described God in action, had already been attempted. the plagues of Egypt are described as the effect of God's λόγος coming into play

II. The Incision

a. Piercing – ***penetrate*** as elsewhere by παρά, and the "cutting" power of ὁ λόγος extends or penetrates to the innermost recesses of human nature penetrating … capable of judging") introduce figurative and popular language that effectively conveys the notion of an extreme power of penetration. The word of God is able to reach into the deepest recesses of the human personality
    i. Division – to separate means here "division," not "distribution" (2:4); the subtlest relations of human personality, the very border-line between the ψυχή and the πνεῦμα, all this is open to ὁ λόγος The discrimination of the heart's thoughts and intentions entails a sifting process that exhibits the penetrative and unmasking potency of the word
        1. Soul **- seat and center of the inner human life in its many and varied aspects**
        2. Spirit - **a part of human personality, *spirit*** The inner life of humans is divided
        3. Joints and Marrow
            a. Marrow- everywhere with a suggestion of well-being and prosperity. Here, however, the contrast between human self-security and the keenness of God's judgment is at most implicit.
b. Judge – discern
    i. Judge – Both context and derivation suggest a power to judge. The theme of God as judge, though traditional Both context and derivation suggest a power to judge. The theme of God as judge, though traditional
        1. Thoughts - is the unexpressed and hidden thing in man which God's omniscience sees
        2. Intention - **the content of mental processing, *thought, knowledge, insight***
            i. The inner life of a Christian is often a strange mixture of motivations both genuinely spiritual and completely human. It takes a supernaturally discerning agent such as the Word of God to sort these out and to expose what is of the flesh. The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as did Israel of old.
            ii. σύνεσις, the intelligence of man being κριτική in the sense that it discerns If there is any distinction between **ἐνθυμήσεων** (and **ἐννοιῶν**, it is between impulses and reflections, but contemporary usage

hardly distinguished them; indeed ἔννοια could mean "purpose" as well as "conception."

b. Hearts - as center and source of the whole inner life, w. its thinking, feeling, and volition

III. The Exposure

a. Nothing Hidden
    i. No creature
        1. An impression of total exposure and utter defenselessness in the presence of God is sharpened in v 13. That nothing in creation is hidden from God's sight was a Jewish commonplace
    ii. Hidden
    iii. Sight
b. Open
    i. Open
        1. The surveillance predicated of God is exhaustive; nothing escapes his scrutiny. The images of nakedness (γυμνά) and helpless exposure express vividly the plight of anyone who believes he can deceive his creator and judge. In context, the force of v 13 is to assert that exposure to the word of Scripture entails exposure to God himself
    ii. Laid Bare - uncovered
        1. Let them not suppose, therefore, that their motives would go undetected for **nothing is hidden from God's sight**. Instead, **everything is uncovered and laid bare before … Him**. In saying this, the readers were reminded that, like all Christians, they would someday stand before the judgment seat of Christ where they **must give account** to God for their lives (cf. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10
c. Eyes

Word Studies

Word

Living - offer life

Active **to practical expression of capability, *effective, active, powerful***[1]

Two edged sword

Piercing - **to move through a three-dimensional space, *pierce, penetrate***[2]

Division- *so as to separate soul and spirit*[3]

Sword- **Hb 4:12** (for the interpretation 'scalpel[4]

Soul **seat and center of the inner human life in its many and varied aspects, *soul***[5]

Spirit **a part of human personality, *spirit***[6]The inner life of humans is divided[7]

Judge -discern

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[1] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 335.

[2] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 245.

[3] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 633.

[4] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 622.

[5] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1099.

[6] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 833.

[7] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 833.

Thoughts is the unexpressed and hidden thing in man which God's omniscience sees[8]

Intention **the content of mental processing, *thought, knowledge, insight***[9]

Hearts - as center and source of the whole inner life, w. its thinking, feeling, and volition[10][11]

Laid bare- uncovered

Commentary Studies

4:12. The all-seeing power of God's word

Ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is found only here and in 13:7, where it clearly refers to the Christian message. In the present, largely nonchristological context, a wider reference is probable, namely to God's

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[8] Friedrich Büchsel, "θυμός, Ἐπιθυμία, Ἐπιθυμέω, Ἐπιθυμητής, Ἐνθυμέομαι, Ἐνθύμησις," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 172.

[9] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 337.

w. **w.** = with

[11] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 508.

warnings to his people throughout OT and NT times (cf. v. 11). The genitive is subjective: not a message about God, but one spoken by God. The distinction claimed by some scholars between ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as indicating an immediate relation to God, and ῥῆμα θεοῦ as God's word in action (Michel) must be tested in each context (see the note on ῥῆμα in 1:3). The word of God is personified. However, the majority patristic and medieval view that the phrase refers to the Son, as in Rev. 19:15, 21 (but not Eph. 5:17), has no support either in the immediate context here, nor in the . 5:17), has no support either in the immediate context here, nor in the epistle as a whole. Some Fathers take ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ to mean the word proclaimed in law, gospel, or generally in scripture. Both explanations are found in Origen and in Augustine (further references in Bleek II.558–60; Riggenbach 109f.; Westcott). The christological explanation has been generally abandoned since Calvin, even by A. T. Hanson 1965, who interprets the previous passage christologically. If the word of God were intended to mean Christ, one would not expect him to be compared with an inanimate object such as a weapon. See Clavier.

The word of God is qualified in increasingly specific terms as ζῶν … ἐνεργής, τομώτερος …, διϊκνούμενος …, and κριτικός. The word of the living God (3:12; cf. 9:14; 10:31) is itself living (Dt. 32:47; Is. 55:11; Jn. 6:63, 68; 7:38; 1 Pet. 1:23).

The main emphasis of these verses is on God's power, and thus the power of his word, to examine and discern. His power to judge is implied, and perhaps indirectly his power to destroy the guilty (cf. Wis. 19:15–17), where God's word or command (ἐπιταγή) is compared with a sword inflicting the pains of death). However, the destructive power of God's word is not emphasized, and these verses remain balanced between the warning of v. 11 and the encouragement of vv. 14–16. For a similar outburst of praise at a turning point in an argument, compare Rom. 11:33–36. See Trompf; Proulx-Alonso Schökel; Vanhoye 1974b.

This passage has much in common with the praise of the spirit of wisdom in Wis. 7:22–8:1, a passage which has other points of contact with Hebrews (→ 1:1); compare especially εὐεργετικόν in Wis. 7:23 with ἐνεργής here, and χωρεῖ in Wis. 7:24 with διϊκνούμενος.

Ζῶν is emphatic by position, recalling ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος in 3:12. In some contexts, "living" may imply "life-giving" (e.g., Ps. 119[LXX 118]:25, X 118]:25, ζῆσόν με κατὰ τὸν λόγον σου, and for the thought, cf. Dt. 8:3), but the context suggests rather God's power to judge.

Ἐνεργής, here as in 1 Cor. 16:9, Phm. 6**, has the active meaning "effective, powerful,*, has the active meaning "effective, powerful," not the passive meaning of ἐνεργόςM .s.v.;

Eph. Ignatius, *Ephesians*

→ See

e.g. *exempli gratia* (= for example)

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs's ed., Stuttgart 1932)

** all references in NT listed

MM Moulton-Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*

s.v. sub voce, sub vocibus (under the word[s])

Grässer 230). Ἐνεργός* of working days. On the development of the form Ezk. 46:1**T 2.308. B, and Jerome on Is. 66, read * of working days. On the development of the form ἐνεργής, see MH12T 2.308. B, and Jerome on Is. 66, read ἐναργής, “clear, evident, visible,” either by mishearing of an unaccented syllable, or under the influence of v. 13.

Τομώτερος, superlative with comparative meaning, formally recalls Philo’s image (*Rer. Div. Her*. 130–132) of the Logos dividing human faculties; but the thought is different. Spicq 1.50–53 considers this passage decisive proof of Philo’s influence on Hebrews; cf. Sowers 66–68; Williamson 386–409, however, concludes that Spicq’s evidence falls short of conviction. It is possible that the writer of Hebrews absorbed Philo’s language but not his thought.

Ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν … is emphatic; elsewhere Hebrews uses ὑπέρ (→ 1:4) following comparative or superlative adjectives.

The use of μάχαιρα (11:34, 37*) raises two questions: (1) the type of weapon referred to, and (2) the associations of the term, particularly in metaphorical expressions such as this. In classical and modern Greek alike, *) raises two questions: (1) the type of weapon referred to, and (2) the associations of the term, particularly in metaphorical expressions such as this. In classical and modern Greek alike, ῥομφαία is a large sword, while μάχαιρα is a knife or sabre (cf. modern Greek μαχαιρίαX (see, e.g., X (see, e.g., Ezk. 5:1f.), where both terms are frequent and most commonly translate *ḥereb*. μάχαιρα of a sacrificial knife; cf. Jos. . 5:2 “knife,” as perhaps in Lk. 22:38 (F. Field 76f.). In the NT, . 6.190 [9.5]). In 1 Macc. 4:6; 2 Macc. 5:13, μάχαιρα must mean “sword”; in Jos. 5:2 “knife,” as perhaps in Lk. 22:38 (F. Field 76f.). In the NT, μάχαιρα is more common than ῥομφαία, but there is considerable overlap of meaning: both terms are associated with divine judgment (μάχαιρα|; Acts 12:2; Rom. 8:35; Heb. 11:34, 37; Rev. 6:4; 13:14; ῥομφαία, Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16), with judicial violence or persecution

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*** all references in Greek Bible listed

MHT Moulton-Howard-Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*

→ See

* all references in Hebrews listed

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs’s ed., Stuttgart 1932)

e.g. *exempli gratia* (= for example)

Jos. Josephus

Jos. De Josepho

|| + parallel(s)

(μάχαιρα, Mk. 14:43, 47f.|. 6:17; |; Acts 12:2; Rom. 8:35; Heb. 11:34, 37; Rev. 6:4; 13:14; ῥομφαία, Rev. 6:8), and, as in the present verse, with the word of God (μάχαιρα, Eph. 6:17; *T*, Rev. 19:15, 21). Sacrificial associations have been suggested for μάχαιρα in Lk. 22:38, as certainly in Gn. 22:6, 10, but in the present context the meaning is rather that of God's power, through his word, to examine, to judge, and if necessary to destroy the guilty. The image of a knife is more appropriate to the idea of probing, which is directly expressed in the text; the traditional translation "sword" expresses the underlying thought of divine judgment. See Hofius 1971; W. Michaelis in *TDN*13*T* 4.524–527.

Δίστομος: cf. Jdg. 3:16 literally; Ps. 149:6; Pr. 5:4; Sir. 21:3; Rev. 1:16 and 2:12*** * figuratively; always with μάχαιρα or ῥομφαία. Both expressions express the weapon's effectiveness; there is no suggestion of allegorising the two edges, as in . .*Adv. Jud*. . 9 and AugB 3.475f.; . *Civ*. 20.21 (P. E. Hughes). The piercing power of (even) a prophet's word is expressed in Is. 49:2; similar language is used in rabbinic writing about the Law (S-14B 3.475f.; Spicq 1982.152f.; Ziegler).

Διϊκνέομαι, "pierce, penetrate, go through," is used literally in Ex. 26:28 in a description of the tabernacle***; elsewhere of missiles (Jos. . *Ant*. 13:96; Cornutus 3 [Horst]); for the thought, cf. Sir. 7:23; Lk. 2:35. That which divides is the word of God, not directly the μάχαιρα.

Ἄχρι is here spatial, not temporal as in 3:13; 6:11. Μερισμός, both here and in 2:4, refers to the result of a process, but in 2:4 the process is one of distribution (cf. Jos. 11:23, of dividing

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Eph. Ignatius, *Ephesians*

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

Tert. Tertullian

Adv. Jud. Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos*

Aug. Augustine

S-B Strack-Billerbeck

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

Jos. Josephus

Jos. De Josepho

the promised land), while here it is one of division or separation; . 11:23, of dividing the promised land), while here it is one of division or separation; μερισμοί is used in 2 Esdr. 6:18 of orders of levites*. The meaning “point of division” is not attested, and the meaning “to the point at which soul and spirit … divide” is □*. The meaning “point of division” is not attested, and the meaning “to the point at which soul and spirit … divide” is difficult in itself.

The construction and meaning of the following words are unclear. The text is almost certainly ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, not the poorly attested ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος (D E K) influenced by the following phrase, and not the easier σώματος of 2464, 2495 *pcc* (cf. Mt. 10:28). The order does not suggest a descending scale, with ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν representing the bodily aspect of human nature; nor is there any obvious link between items in the two pairs, either chiastically or in parallel. Possible meanings are (1) a threefold division between soul, spirit, and bodily organs (cf. 1 Thes. 5:23); (2) a division between soul and spirit on the one hand, and joints and marrow on the other (Bengel); (3) division within each of the four (so Bleek, Michel, Héring); and (4) within soul, within spirit, and between joints and marrow (Braun). Spicq 1.52f., followed by Sowers 68f., has linked (1) with Philo’s distinction between an animal soul and a rational principle (*Det. Pot. Ins*. 82); but Philo uses “soul” of both together, and “spirit” of its higher or most dominant part (*Rev. Div. Her*. 55; cf. *Migr.□.* 3; Williamson 401–406), and he is more concerned with distinctions than divisions. Against (1) is the likelihood that καί and τε καί are mere stylistic variants, as probably in 2:4. Against (2) and (4), joints and marrow do not physiologically touch, and it is unnecessary, though not impossible, to suggest that the author thought they did. (3) is the least unsatisfactory and most consistent, though applied to ἁρμῶν it would have to mean the separation of bones from one another at the joint.

It is also uncertain whether ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν is to be understood literally or figuratively. For the figurative use, cf. Eur. . .□. 255: μυελὸς ψυχῆς, “the inmost part of the soul.” However, literal and figurative associations of parts of the body are not separated in biblical anthropology, which does not sharply distinguish between physical and psychological functions (cf. καρδία below). It is probably misconceived to seek precise definition in such a poetic passage. The general meaning is clearly that the active power of God’s word reaches into the inmost recesses of human existence, to lay bare and judge. A positive counterpart to this idea may be found in 10:19–25.

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

pc a few

Migr. Abr. De Migratione Abrahami

Eur. Euripides

Hipp. Hippolytus

Ψυχή is used alone in 6:19; 10:38 = Hab. 2:4; 10:39; 12:3; 13:17*, with a meaning close to that of “life.” The singular *, with a meaning close to that of “life.” The singular πνεῦμα→→ 1:7.

Ἁρμός (Sir. 17:2; Aristeas 71 absolutely; ἁρμοὶ τοῦ σώματος, 4 Macc. 10:5***) is used of human joints and of joins between stones in a wall. *) is used of human joints and of joins between stones in a wall. ΜυελόςD §29[2]) appears in Gn. 45:18 figuratively of the “fat/marrow of the land”; in Jb. 21:24 in parallel with “fat”; and in Jb. 33:24***, D §29[2]) appears in Gn. 45:18 figuratively of the “fat/marrow of the land”; in Jb. 21:24 in parallel with “fat”; and in Jb. 33:24**15*, everywhere with a suggestion of well-being and prosperity. Here, however, the contrast between human self-security and the keenness of God’s judgment is at most implicit.

Κριτικός*** (classical; F. * (classical; F. Büchsel in *T*T.Mut. Nom*. 110; cf. Simpson 37f.) denotes the ability to discern, like διάκρισις in 1 Cor. 12:10. Both context and derivation suggest a power to judge. The theme of God as judge, though traditional*), is also significant for the author’s own thought, and recurs at the climax of the epistle (12:23, κρίμα, 6:2*), is also significant for the author’s own thought, and recurs at the climax of the epistle (12:23, κριτὴς*).; cf. κατακρίνω with a human subject, 11:716*).

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* all references in Hebrews listed

→ See

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

BD Blass-Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

Mut. Nom. De Mutatione Nominum

* all references in Hebrews listed

* all references in Hebrews listed

Ἐνθύμησις* may refer more to the human will, in contrast with * may refer more to the human will, in contrast with * in a more intellectual sense (cf. * in a more intellectual sense (cf. X 38):33]). However, the present passage, like , 8:10; 10:16 [both = Je. 31(LXX, where *1 Clem*. 21:9, is more concerned with what the two terms have in common as human faculties. In the LXX, where ἐνθύμησις does not occur, ἐνθύμημα is generally pejorative, in contrast with →. Here, between the warning of v. 11 and the encouragement of vv. 14–16, the context leaves the meaning open. Καρδία 17→ 3:12.

4:13. God the judge of all

The author moves smoothly from the word of God to God himself, the implied antecedent of αὐτοῦ (twice) and of ὅν in the final phrase. The two main clauses are closely parallel, the double negative in the first appearing as a positive statement in the second.

Κτίσις thus means "creature," not "creation" as in 9:11; the parallel with πάντα suggests that other than human creatures are included. Ἀφανής** is used of wisdom in Sir. 20:30; 41:14 in the sense of "invisible"; here the context requires the meaning "hidden" (* is used of wisdom in Sir. 20:30; 41:14 in the sense of "invisible"; here the context requires the meaning "hidden" (SpicqB, citing Mugler 68f.). The thought of everything being visible to God is common in classical literature (e.g., Seneca, B, citing Mugler 68f.). The thought of everything being

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* all references in Hebrews listed

* all references in Hebrews listed

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs's ed., Stuttgart 1932)

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs's ed., Stuttgart 1932)

→ See

** all references in NT listed

SB Sources Bibliques

e.g. *exempli gratia* (= for example)

visible to God is common in classical literature (e.g.., Seneca, *Ep*. 2:11, 14), in the OT (e.g., Ps. 139), and in other Jewish writings (Aristeas 132f.; 2 Bar. 83:3). 83:1; Epict18. 2:11, 14), in the OT (e.g19., Ps. 139), and in other Jewish writings (Aristeas 132f.; 2 Bar. 83:3).

Ἐνώπιον is found in hellenistic texts as an equivalent for the classical πρό, and frequently in the LXX, Luke-Acts and Revelation, especially with reference to God, as here and in 13:21*. For *. For ἐνώπιον τοῦ V 8); →V 8); 20→ 6:16.

Γυμνά* here has the metaphorical sense of "exposed" to examination, possibly reflecting the view expressed in 2 Cor. 5:3 and in secular literature (Bauer * here has the metaphorical sense of "exposed" to examination, possibly reflecting the view expressed in 2 Cor. 5:3 and in secular literature (Bauer .) that God sees through the bodily covering to the soul within.

The meaning of τετραχηλισμένα*** ("laid bare"; TNT "exposed") is determined by the immediate context (T "exposed") is determined by the immediate context (γυμνά), and by the parallel with οὐκ … ἀφανής in v. 13a. Hesychius glosses it as πεφανερωμένα. The underlying

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Ep. Epistulae

Epict. Epictetus

e.g. *exempli gratia* (= for example)

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs's ed., Stuttgart 1932)

* all references in Hebrews listed

EVV English Version(s)

→ See

* all references in Hebrews listed

s.v. sub voce, sub vocibus (under the word[s])

*** all references in Greek Bible listed

TNT The Translator's New Testament

imagery has been intensively and inconclusively discussed since patristic times (see Bleek II.585–590). The most plausible explanations are (1) the wrestler gripping an opponent's neck and throwing him down (Philo, *Somn*. 2.34; *Praem. Poen*. 29 [both ἐκτραχηλίζω]; *Omn. Prob. Lib*. 159; *Rer. Div. Her*. 274; Grässer; Lane); (2) the neck of a sacrificial animal bared for the knife (Attridge). In the present passage, (1) would bring in the alien idea of a contest between God and human beings (unless there is a remote allusion to the OT *rîb* or judicial controversy between God and his people); (2) would overemphasize the idea of destruction, and there is no reference to sacrifice in this passage (→ ?. v. 12). Philo, *Mut. Nom*?. 81, extends the metaphor of wrestling to philosophical debate, using τραχηλίζω. Héring (similarly Montefiore) takes τετραχηλισμένα and γυμνά as complementary rather than synonymous: "the word of God brings down the adversary and strips him by despoiling him of his weapons" (γυμνά). This involves inversion of the two terms, but otherwise makes good sense of a word too rare to be a dead metaphor.

Ὀφθαλμοίς*; for the thought, cf. 1 Pet. 3:12 = Ps. 34(LXX 33):16. See W. Michaelis in ?*TTDN*21*T* 5.377f.

Πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος may mean (1) "about whom we (= I) speak," or (2) "to whom we must (all) give account," "with whom we must reckon." In favour of (1), it may be said that πρός is frequent in Hebrews (alongside περί, 5:11) in the sense of "concerning" (→→ 1:7, 2:17; 5:1). In those verses, however, τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν in a set phrase, and if this were the meaning, one might expect ἡμῶν rather than ἡμῖν (cf. 2 Cor. 1:18). Meaning (1) is supported among others by Windisch and Michel, but (2) has support among ancient authorities (Peshitta, Chrysostom; cf. Bleek II.590–92) and modern commentators (G. Kittel in *T*?*T.s.v*?. 2e; Braun, Attridge, Lane, Grässer), who, however, mention (1) as possible. Meaning (2) fits better in a passage concerned with God's judgment. The language, however, is discreetly unemphatic. There is a faint play on

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→ See

Mut. Nom. De Mutatione Nominum

* all references in Hebrews listed

LXX Septuagint (normally A. Rahlfs's ed., Stuttgart 1932)

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

→ See

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

s.v. sub voce, sub vocibus (under the word[s])

words with [22] ὁ λόγος at the beginning of v. 12: “He to whom the Word has been given shall be required to give a word in return” (G. R. Hughes 1979.11); but the meaning is different.[23]

12–13 The parenetic unit begun in 3:7 is brought to a brief and vigorous conclusion in vv 12–13, where the writer provides the supporting reason for the diligence enjoined in v 11 (see *Comment* above). God’s word, whose sanctions were imposed so effectively upon the Exodus generation, is performative today and confronts the Christian community with the same alternatives of rest and wrath (cf. Trompf, *STT* 25 [1971] 123). Those who remain insensitive to the voice of God in Scripture may discover that God’s word is also a lethal weapon. When the past generation sought to contravene the oath of God and to enter Canaan, they were driven back and fell by the sword (μάχαιρα) of the Amalekites and the Canaanites (Num 14:43–45). The word of God poses a judgment that is more threatening and sharper than any double-edged sword (μάχαιρα, v 12) because it exposes the intentions of the heart and renders one defenseless before God’s scrutinizing gaze (cf. Hofius, *Katapausis*, 139; Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology,” 187).

The clear allusion to the folly of Israel at Kadesh in disregard of God’s oath and the warning of Moses (Num 14:43) indicates that the expression ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, “the word of God,” must have specific reference to the text of Scripture cited so extensively in 3:7–4:11, and especially to Ps 95:7*b*–11. This needs to be affirmed in the presence of a persistent desire to find in v 12 a personal reference to Jesus as the Logos (Clavier, “Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ,” 81–93; Williamson, *Philo*, 390, 398; Swetnam, *Bi*b*b* 62 [1981] 214–24). There is no hypostatization of the Logos in v 12

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[23] Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 260–65.

ST Studia theologica

Bib Biblica

(rightly insisted on by Trompf, *T□T* 25 [1971] 123–27). The reference is to Ps 95:7*b*–11 in which the living, piercing word of God addresses this generation in a critical fashion and poses as the only alternative to faithfulness the option of death (3:17; 4:11).

This dynamic conception of the word of God is a proper corollary to the introduction of the quotation of Ps 95:7*b*–11 as the words of the Holy Spirit (3:7*a*). The description of God's word as ζῶν … καὶ ἐνεργής, "living and effective," signifies that it is performative; it possesses the power to effect its own utterance. Performatives, by definition, commit the speaker to stand by his words. That is demonstrated with reference to Ps 95:7*b*–11 in 3:7–11 (cf. Caird, *Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 20–25) and had immediate relevance for a community that had become careless in its attitude toward the word of promise expressed in Scripture.

The predicates ascribed to the word of God in v 12*b* (διϊκνούμενος … κριτικός, "penetrating … capable of judging") introduce figurative and popular language that effectively conveys the notion of an extreme power of penetration. The word of God is able to reach into the deepest recesses of the human personality (Ps 95:10*b*; cf. Wis 1:6). The discrimination of the heart's thoughts and intentions entails a sifting process that exhibits the penetrative and unmasking potency of the word (cf. Simpson, *Ev*Q*Q* 18 [1946] 37–38).

An impression of total exposure and utter defenselessness in the presence of God is sharpened in v 13. That nothing in creation is hidden from God's sight was a Jewish commonplace (e.g., *Tg. Neof*.. Gen 3:9, "And the Lord God called the man and said to him: Look, the whole world which I created is manifest before me; darkness and light are manifest before me; and do you think that the place where you are standing is not manifest before me?" cf. *Tg.* .□. Gen 4:14; .. *Ps.-J*□. Gen 3:9; 24:62; Deut 1:17; 29:8; 32:34; and often). The surveillance predicated of God is exhaustive; nothing escapes his scrutiny. The images of nakedness (γυμνά) and helpless exposure (τετραχηλισμέναf) express vividly the plight of anyone who believes he can deceive his creator and judge. In context, the force of v 13 is to assert that exposure to the word of Scripture entails

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EvQ The Evangelical Quarterly

Tg. Neof. Targum Neofiti I

Tg. Neof. Targum Neofiti I

Tg. Ps.-J. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

exposure to God himself.[24] f25f) express vividly the plight of anyone who believes he can deceive his creator and judge. In context, the force of v 13 is to assert that exposure to the word of Scripture entails exposure to God himself.[26]

The personifying of the divine **λόγος,** in a passage which described God in action, had already been attempted. In Wis 18:15, for example, the plagues of Egypt are described as the effect of God's λόγος coming into play: ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν … ξίφος ὀξὺ τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγήν σου φέρων. In Wis 1:6, again, the φιλάνθρωπον πνεῦμα σοφία, which cannot tolerate blasphemy, reacts against it: ὅτι τῶν νεφρῶν αὐτοῦ (the blasphemer) μάρτυς ὁ θεός, καὶ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ ἐπίσκοπος ἀληθής, so that no muttering of rebellion is unmarked. Here the writer poetically personifies the revelation of God for a moment. Ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is God speaking, and speaking in words which are charged with doom and promise (3:7f.). The revelation, however, is broader than the scripture; it includes the revelation of God's purpose in

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ff There is considerable difference of opinion concerning the source of the metaphor expressed by the pf ptcp τετραχηλισμένα. The use of the verb τραχηλίζειν, "to grip in a neck-hold," as a term appropriate to wrestling finds vivid illustration in Philo. See, for example, *On Dreams* 2.34: evil men think it right to overthrow the good "by using ingenious and complicated tricks to seize their neck and get their head gripped in a neck-hold [ἐκτραχηλίζειν] and then by sweeping their legs from under them to hurl them to the ground"; *On Rewards and Punishments* 29: "here to admit defeat, like an athlete with his head gripped in a neck-hold [ἐκτραχηλιζόμενος] by a stronger rival." In v 13 the pf ptcp coupled with γυμνά, "uncovered," "naked," can only express a state of exposure to God's scrutiny. cf. Simpson, *EvQ* 18 (1946) 38.

[26] William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, vol. 47A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 102–3.

Jesus (1:1f.). The free application of ὁ λόγος (τοῦ θεοῦ) in primitive Christianity is seen in 1 P 1:23f.; Ja 1:18f., quite apart from the specific application of the term to the person of Christ (Jn 1:1–18). Here it denotes the Christian gospel declared authoritatively by men like the writer, an inspired message which carries on the OT revelation of God's promises and threats, and which is vitally effective. No dead letter, this λόγος! The rhetorical outburst in vv. 12f. is a preacher's equivalent for the common idea that the sense of God's all-seeing scrutiny should deter men from evil-doing, as, *e.g.*, in Plautus (*Captivi*, 2. 63, "est profecto deu', qui quae nos gerimus auditque et uidet"). This had been deepened by ethical writers like Seneca (*Ep.* lxxxiii. I, "nihil deo clusum est, interest animis nostris et cogitationibus mediis intervenit"), Epictetus (ii. 14, 11, οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν αὐτὸν οὐ μόνον ποιοῦντα ἀλλ' οὐδὲ διανοούμενον ἢ ἐνθυμούμενον), and the author of the *Epistle of Aristeas* (132–133: Moses teaches ὅτι μόνος ὁ θεός ἐστι … καὶ οὐθὲν αὐτὸν λανθάνει τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς γινομένων ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων κρυφίως … κἂν ἐννοηθῇ τις κακίαν ἐπιτελεῖν, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι, μὴ ὅτι καὶ πράξας, and 210: the characteristic note of piety is τὸ διαλαμβάνειν ὅτι πάντα διαπαντὸς ὁ θεὸς ἐνεργεῖ καὶ γινώσκει, καὶ οὐθὲν ἂν λάθοι ἄδικον ποιήσας ἢ κακὸν ἐργασάμενος ἄνθρωπος), as well as by apocalyptists like the author of Baruch (83:3: He will assuredly examine the secret thoughts and that which is laid up in the secret chambers of all the members of man). But our author has one particular affinity. Take Philo's interpretation of o's interpretation of διεῖλεν αὐτὰ μέσα in Gn 15:10. Scripture means, he explains (*quis rer. div. haeres*, 26) that it was God who divided them, τῷ τομιεῖ τῶ συμπάντων ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ, ὃς εἰς τὴν ὀξυτάτην ἀκονηθεὶς ἀκμὴν διαιρῶν οὐδέποτε λήγει. τὰ γὰρ αἰσθητὰ πάντα ἐπειδὰν μέχρι τῶν ἀτόμων καὶ λεγομένων ἀμερῶν διεξέλθῃ, πάλιν ἀπὸ τούτων τὰ λόγῳ θεωρητὰ εἰς ἀμυθήτους καὶ ἀπεριγράφους μοίρας ἄρχεται διαιρεῖν οὗτος ὁ τομεύς. He returns (in 48) to this analytic function of the Logos in God and man, and in *De mutatione nominum* (18) speaks of ἠκονημένον καὶ ὀξὺν λόγον, μαστεύειν καὶ ἀναζητεῖν ἕκαστα ἱκανόν. Still, the Logos is τομεύςo connects the latter with o connects the latter with ὁ λόγος, as he does in *quod deter. pot.* 29, *Cherub.* 9, etc., ὁ λόγος is the human faculty of reason. Obviously, our author is using Philonic language rather than Philonic ideas.

Ἐνεργής (for which B, by another blunder, has B, by another blunder, has ἐναργής = evidensX term, but denotes in Greek vital activity (cp. Schol. on Soph. X term, but denotes in Greek vital activity (cp. Schol. on Soph. *Oed. Tyr.* 45, ζώσας ἀντὶ ἐνεργεστέρας). Neither is X term; the comparison of a LXX term; the comparison of ὁ λόγος to a sword arose through the

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Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

B saec. iv. [03: δ 1] cont. 1:1–9:18: for remainder cp. cursive 293.

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

resemblance between the tongue and a "dagger," though μάχαιρα[1]ῥομφαία) or short.[1] The comparative is followed (cp. Lk 16:8) by ὑπέρ, as elsewhere by παρά, and the "cutting" power of ὁ λόγος extends or penetrates to the innermost recesses of human nature—**ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς**[2]**καὶ πνεύματος,**[2] **ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν** (the conj. μελῶνD K here (as in 11:32) insert was in the text known to Clem. Alex. *quis dives*, 41). D K here (as in 11:32) insert **τε** before the first καί, but there is no idea of distinguishing the psychical and the physical spheres; ἅρμων … X in is merely a metaphorical equivalent for ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος. Μερισμός (only in LXX in Jb 11:20, 2 Es 6:18) means here "division," not "distribution" (2:4); the subtlest relations of human personality, the very border-line between the ψυχή and the πνεῦμα, all this is open to ὁ λόγος. The metaphorical use of μυελῶν in this sense is as old as Euripides, who speaks of μὴ πρὸς ἄκρον μυελὸν ψυχῆς (*Hippolytus*, 255).

According to Philo (o (*De Cherubim*, 8, 9), the flaming sword of Gn 3:24 is a symbol either of the sun, as the swiftest of existences (circling the whole world in a single day), or of reason, ὀξυκινητότατον γὰρ καὶ θέρμον λόγος καὶ μάλιστα ὁ τοῦ αἰτίου. Learn from the fiery sword, o my soul, he adds, to note the presence and power of this divine Reason, ὅς οὐδέποτε λήγει κινούμενος σπουδῇ πάσῃ πρὸς αἵρεσιν μὲν τῶν καλῶν, φυγὴν δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων. But there is a still better parallel to the thought in Lucian's account of the impression made by the address (ὁ λόγος) of a philosopher: οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἐπιπολῆς οὐδ' ὡς ἔτυχεν ἡμῶν ὁ λόγος καθίκετο, βαθεῖα δὲ καὶ καίριος ἡ πληγὴ ἐγένετο, καὶ μάλα εὐστόχως ἐνεχθεὶς ὁ λόγος αὐτήν, εἰ οἷόν τε εἰπεῖν, διέκοψε τὴν ψυχήν (*Nigr.* 35). Only, Lucian proceeds to compare the soul of a cultured person to a target at which the words of the wise are aimed. Similarly, in pseudo-Phocylides, 124: ὅπλον τοι λόγος ἀνδρὶ τομώτερον ἐστι σιδήρου, and Od. Sol. 12:5: for the swiftness of the Word is inexpressible, and like its expression is its swiftness and force, and its course knows no limit.

The **μερισμοῦ … μυελῶν** passage is "a mere rhetorical accumulation of terms to describe the whole mental nature of man" (A. B. Davidson); the climax is καρδία, for what underlies human failure is καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπίστιας (3:12), and the writer's warning all along has been against

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[1] The description was familiar to readers of the LXX, *e.g.* Pr 5:4 ἠκονημένον μᾶλλον μαχαίρας διστόμου.

[2] The subtlety of thought led afterwards to the change of πνεύματος into σώματος (2, 38, 257, 547, 1245).

D saec. (vi.) [06: α 1026] cont. 1:1–13:20. Codex Claromontanus is a Graeco-Latin MS, whose Greek text is poorly* reproduced in the later (saec. ix.–x.) E = codex Sangermanensis. The Greek text of the latter (1:1–12:8) is therefore of no independent value (cp. Hort in WH, §§ 335–337); for its Latin text, as well as for that of F=codex Augiensis (saec. ix.), whose Greek text of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους has not been preserved, see below, p. lxix.

K saec. ix. [018:1:1].

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

hardening the heart, *i.e.* obdurate disobedience. Hence the point of **καὶ κριτικός κτλ.** Κριτικός is another of his terms which are classical, not religious; it is used by Aristotle (*Eth. Nik.* vi. 10) of ἡ σύνεσις, the intelligence of man being κριτική in the sense that it discerns. If there is any distinction between **ἐνθυμήσεων** (ἐνθυμήσεως C* D* W D* tW v t Lucifer) and **ἐννοιῶν**, it is between impulses and reflections, but contemporary usage hardly distinguished them; indeed ἔννοια could mean "purpose" as well as "conception." The two words are another alliterative phrase for "thought and conception," X term., unlike ἐνθύμησις, being a LX27X term.

In v. 13 **καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανής** κτλ., κτίσις means anything created (as in Ro 8:39), and **αὐτοῦ** is "God's." The negative side is followed by the positive, **πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχηλισμένα.** The nearest verbal parallel is in En 9:5 πάντα ἐνώπιόν σου φανερὰ καὶ ἀκάλυπτα, where the context points as here to secret sins. The general idea was familiar; *e.g.* (above, p. 55) "nihil deo clusum est, interest animis nostris et cogitationibus mediis intervenit." Μόνῳ γὰρ ἔξεστι θεῷ, ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν (Philo, o, *de Abrahamo*, 21). But what the writer had in mind was a passage like that in *de Cherub.* o explains Dt 29:29 (o explains Dt 29:29 (τὰ κρυπτὰ κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ, τὰ δὲ φανερὰ γενέσει γνώριμα) by arguing, γενητὸς δὲ οὐδεὶς ἱκανὸς γνώμης ἀφανοῦς κατιδεῖν ἐνθύμημα, μόνος δὲ ὁ θεός. Hence, he adds, the injunction (Nu 5:18) τὴν ψυχὴν "ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ στῆσαι" with head uncovered; which means, the soul τὸ κεφάλαιον δόγμα γυμνωθεῖσαν καὶ τὴν γνώμην ᾗ κέχρηται ἀπαμφιασθεῖσαν, ἵν' ὄψεσι ταῖς ἀκριβεστάταις

C saec. v. [04: δ 3] cont. 2:4–7:26; 9:15–10:24; 12:16–13:25.

D saec. (vi.) [06: α 1026] cont. 1:1–13:20. Codex Claromontanus is a Graeco-Latin MS, whose Greek text is poorly* reproduced in the later (saec. ix.–x.) E = codex Sangermanensis. The Greek text of the latter (1:1–12:8) is therefore of no independent value (cp. Hort in WH, §§ 335–337); for its Latin text, as well as for that of F=codex Augiensis (saec. ix.), whose Greek text of Πρὸς Ἑβραίους has not been preserved, see below, p. lxix.

W saec. (iv.–vi.) [I] cont. 1:1–3, 9–12; 2:4–7, 12–14; 3:4–6, 14–16; 4:3–6, 12–14; 5:5–7; 6:1–3, 10–13, 20; 7:1–2, 7–11, 18–20, 27–28; 8:1, 7–9; 9:1–4, 9–11, 16–19, 25–27; 10:5–8, 16–18, 26–29, 35–38; 11:6–7, 12–15, 22–24, 31–33, 38–40; 12:1, 7–9, 16–18, 25–27; 13:7–9, 16–18, 23–25: *NT MSS in Freer Collection, The Washington MS of the Epp. of Paul* (1918), pp. 294–306. Supports Alexandrian text, and is "quite free from Western readings."

vt Old Latin

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

Philo *Philonis Alexandriai Opera Quae Supersunt* (recognoverunt L. Cohn et P. Wendland).

ἐπικριθεῖσα τοῦ ἀδεκάστου θεοῦ κτλ., the closing description of God being τῷ μόνῳ γυμνὴν ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν δυναμένῳ. For γυμνά see also M. Aurel. 12:2 ὁ θεὸς πάντα τὰ ἡγεμονικὰ γυμνὰ τῶν ὑλικῶν ἀγγείων … ὁρᾷ. **Τετραχηλισμένα** must mean something similar, "exposed" or "bared" ("g; ," v□g; πεφανερωμένα, Hesych.).

Though τραχηλιζω does not occur in the LXX, the writer was familiar with it in Philo, where it suggests a wrestler "downing" his opponent by seizing his throat. How this metaphorical use of throttling or tormenting could yield the metaphorical passive sense of "exposed," is not easy to see. The X, the writer was familiar with it in Philo, where it suggests a wrestler "downing" his opponent by seizing his throat. How this metaphorical use of throttling or tormenting could yield the metaphorical passive sense of "exposed," is not easy to see. The Philonic sense of "depressed" or "bent down" would yield here the meaning "abashed," *i.e.* hanging down the head in shame ("conscientia male factorum in ruborem aguntur caputque mittunt," Wettstein). But this is hardly on a level with γυμνά. The most probable clue is to be found in the practice of exposing an offender's face by pushing his head back, as if the word were an equivalent for the Latin "resupinata" in the sense of "manifesta." The bending back of the neck produced this exposure. Thus when Vitellius was dragged along the Via Sacra to be murdered, it was "reducto coma capite, ceu noxii solent, atque etiam mento mucrone gladii subrecto, ut visendam praeberet faciem" (Suet. *Vit. Vitell.* 17).

In the last five words, **πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος**, which are impressive by their bare simplicity, there is a slight play on the term λόγος here and in v. 12, although in view of the flexible use of the term, *e.g.* in 5:11 and 13:17, it might be even doubtful if the writer intended more than a verbal assonance. The general sense of the phrase is best conveyed by "with whom we have to reckon." (*a*) This rendering, "to whom we have to account (or, to render our account)," was adopted without question by the Greek fathers from Chrysostom (αὐτῷ μέλλομεν δοῦναι εὐθύνας τῶν πεπραγμένων) onwards, and the papyri support the origin of the phrase as a commercial metaphor; *e.g. O*P.*P.* 1188:5 (A.D. 13) ὡς πρὸς σὲ τοῦ περὶ τῶν ἀγνοη[θέντων] ζη[τήματος] ἐσο[μένου] (*sc.* λόγου), and Hibeh Papyri, 53:4 (246 B.C.) πειρῶ οὖν ἀσφολῶς ὡς πρὸς σὲ τοῦ λόγου ἐσομένου. (*b*) The alternative rendering, "with whom we have to do," has equal support in Gk. usage; *e.g.*X phrase □X phrase λόγος μοι πρός σε (1 K 2:14; 2 K 9:5) and in Jg 17:7 (μακράν εἰσιν Σιδωνίων, καὶ λόγον οὐκ ἔχουσιν πρὸς ἄνθρωπον). The former idea is predominant, however, as the context suggests (cp. Ignat. *ad Magn* 3, τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον οὐ πρὸς σάρκα ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ πρὸς θεὸν τὸν τὰ κρύφια εἰδότα), and includes the latter. It is plainly the view of the early anti-Marcionite treatise, which has been preserved among the works of Ephraem Syrus (cp. Preuschen, *Zeitschrift für die neutest. Wissenschaft*, 1911, pp. 243–269), where the passage is quoted from a text like this: ὡς καὶ ὁ Παῦλος λέγει, ζῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πασὰν μάχαιραν δίστομον, διϊκνούμενον μέχρι μερισμοῦ πνεύματος καὶ

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vg Vulgate

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

OP The Oxyrhynchus Papyri (ed. B. P. Grenfell and A. Hunt).

LXX *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Version* (ed. H. B. Swete).

σαρκός, μέχρι ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικός ἐστιν ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανὴς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐμφανῆ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι γυμνοὶ καὶ τετραχηλισμένοι ἐσμὲν ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ ἔκαστος ἡμῶν λόγον αὐτῷ ἀποδιδόναι. The rendering, "who is our subject, of whom we are speaking" (πρός = with reference to, and ἡμῖν[28] as in 5:11), is impossibly flat.[29]

3. GOD'S WORD AND THE THRONE OF GRACE (4:12–16)

Having completed his exposition of Psalm 95 and Israel's failure to enter rest, the writer brought this section of warning to a conclusion that is both sobering and comforting. God's Word is a solemn instrument of divine judgment, but His throne is both gracious and merciful.

4:12. The lesson he had just taught from the Old Testament Scriptures was not a mere historical tale. Instead, as had already been made clear by much he had said, it was powerfully relevant to his audience. **For the Word of God is living** (*zōn*) **and active** (*energēs*). Not only that, its penetrating power is greater **than any double-edged sword** and reaches the innermost being of a person so that **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. In doing this, it is able to discriminate successfully between what is spiritual in man and what is merely "soulish" or natural (**it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit**), and does so even when these often-contradictory inner elements are interwoven as closely as **joints and marrow**. The inner life of a Christian is often a strange mixture of motivations both genuinely spiritual and completely human. It takes a supernaturally discerning agent such as the Word of God to sort these out and to expose what is of the flesh. The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as did Israel of old.

4:13. Let them not suppose, therefore, that their motives would go undetected for **nothing is hidden from God's sight**. Instead, **everything is uncovered and laid bare before … Him**. In saying this, the readers were reminded that, like all Christians, they would someday stand before the judgment seat of Christ where they **must give account** to God for their lives (cf. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10). If at that time their lives are seen to be marked by the kind of failure they have

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[29] James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1924), 54–58.

been warned against, the writer implied they will suffer loss of reward (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11–15). In this context the loss they suffer will be that of their inheritance-rest.[30]

4:12–13 The entire section is concluded in vv. 12–13. Wray wrongly read the structure of verb plus *oun* as indicating a new section, but this does not begin until v. 14. Hebrews 4:12–13 can still be read as an amplification of the warning in 4:11.[68]3[3]S4SV. [4] Greek text and the NI□V. The use of *gar*, "for," serves to indicate the reason for seeking to enter God's rest: nothing escapes God's notice and he will judge unbelief.

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[30] Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 789–90.

[683] Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 86; γάς indicates the conclusion of 4:11 and in a sense the conclusion of 4:1–11.

UBS *The Greek New Testament*. United Bible Societies, 4th ed.

[4] *The Greek New Testament*. United Bible Societies, 4th ed.

NIV New International Version

Many have suggested a hymnic background/structure for these verses,[684] but the smooth transition coupled with the use of *logos* ("word") indicates the author's own composition. The phrase *ho logos tou theou*, "the word of God," is found in Hebrews only here and in 13:7 and can have two interpretations. The majority of the church fathers and medieval theologians saw it as referring to Jesus the Son.[685] Since the Reformation, the phrase has usually been interpreted as the written Word of God. In this latter interpretation, the genitive is subjective and the reference includes both Old and New Testaments. Lane noted "the word of God" must have specific reference to the text of Scripture extensively cited in 3:7–4:11, especially Ps 95:7–11[686]. Dunn believed that the identification of the "word of God" as the gospel was so firmly established in Apostolic Christianity that the equation of Christ with the Word "does not seem to have occurred" to the author. For him, the word of preaching is personified and identified with Christ because the gospel is the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Dunn compared the Lukan concept of "the word" as representing the gospel and not a hypostatization of Christ. He surveyed the power of the word preached in several Pauline texts and concluded that Heb 4:12 is in this same pattern. For him, there is "no inherent logic" in the New Testament author's own understanding of their experience or in the language they used to describe it "which made it necessary for them to push the concept of the word beyond that of the (impersonal) power of God to that of a hypostatization or divine being."[687] This perspective is difficult if not impossible to square with the Prologue of John's Gospel where Jesus is described as the "Word" of God.

The best argument for interpreting *logos* in 4:12–13 as Jesus the Word in a Johannine sense is made by Swetnam.[688] The evidence is actually quite strong. First, it was virtually the only view during the time of the church fathers and the Middle Ages, with Chrysostom being the sole

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[684] H. Braun, *An Die Hebräer*, HNT 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 117; Michel, *Hebräer*, 197; Nauck, "Zum Aufbau des Hebräerbriefes," 205.

[685] So Athanasius in his *Orations Against the Arians*, 2.21, 72; and Chrysostom, NPNF 14:398.

[686] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 102–3.

[687] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 233.

[688] J. Swetnam, "Jesus as *Logos* in Hebrews 4, 12–13," *Bib* 62 (1981): 214–24. For the material in the next three paragraphs of the text, I am indebted to Swetnam's analysis. Twenty years later, Swetnam maintained and summarized his position in "The Context of the Crux at Hebrews 5, 7–8," FN *XIV* (2001), 103–7. This interpretation was revived in the twentieth century by R. Harris, *Testimonies* II (Cambridge: [s.n.], 1920), 52–57.

dissenter during the time of the fathers. While tradition cannot be the *sine qua non* ofV "the message they heard"), and it seems contextually odd for the author to use V "the message they heard"), and it seems contextually odd for the author to use *logos* in a threatening tone. There is also the difficulty of seeing two meanings of *logos* ("word" and "account") within the confines of two verses. Hebrews 4:14, connected by *oun*, closely links "since we have a great high priest." with the preceding *logos* (though it is true the *oun* could be reaching back to the total section of 4:1–13).

Third, from a lexical perspective, it makes more sense to translate *machaira* as "knife" rather than "sword," given what is stated in the remainder of v. 12.[68]9[9] Also, the use of *gar* which introduces v. 12 may refer back to the main clause of the preceding sentence and not the purpose clause to which it is immediately joined (as is the case in all other such constructions in Hebrews). The point of the author would be this: although the exodus generation failed to enter rest, Christians will succeed because of the work of Jesus, the Logos, in their lives. The use of *zōn* ("living") to qualify "word" implies personality. Nowhere else in Hebrews is this word used to describe non-personal life, but it is used four times of God, twice of Jesus, and five times of human life.[0][0] The introductory *kai* in v. 13 is best seen in an adversative sense where the author changed the subject from Jesus in v. 12 to God in v. 13. Verse 12 is taken in a positive way, while v. 13 is the negative counterpart. In Heb 4:12, Jesus as the Word is the "agent of interior change in man." In 4:13 he appears as an intercessor with God, so Swetnam translated:

> "And yet no creature is hidden before him, but all things are bare and exposed before his eyes, with whom on our behalf is the Word.… The Word is "with" God to act as one who pleads with God in favor of Christians who sin. This is why 4:14 follows logically from 4:13 with no break in the thought when it speaks of the 'high priest' … and why 4:15–16 speaks about the sympathy of the high priest and the importance of turning to him for mercy."[69]1[1]

A final argument in favor of taking the "word" in 4:12 to refer to Jesus is the connection of these verses with the prologue, Heb 1:1–2 to form an *inclusio*. It is likely that 4:14 is the beginning of a new major section of the epistle. The author began in the prologue with the statement "God spoke" in one who is a Son; now he concludes this section with a reference to God's "Word," the Son, in Heb 4:13.

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[689] This meaning is given by Michaelis, "μάχαιρα," *TDNT* 4:524–27. The Greek term μάχαιρα was so used in Josh 5:2–9 of the knives used for circumcision. The reference to Joshua in 4:8 aids in the comparison as well.

[690] Swetnam, "Jesus as *Logos*," 216.

[691] Ibid., 221–22. Swetnam said the translation "on our behalf is the Word" is the best idiomatic way to render in English the Greek construction ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος.

G. Smillie has recently taken up the case that *logos* at the end of v. 13 corresponds to the first use of *logos* in v. 12. He noted that both uses are articular in form and bracket Heb 4:12–13. The usual interpretation of the final phrase in v. 13 is "as an idiom from the language of the business world: 'to whom we must give account.' " To attribute such diverse meaning of the same word in the short confines of two verses is

> uncharacteristic of a writer who demonstrates the literary sensibilities of our author that he would, … bring the pericope to a close using *ho logos* as the very last word in a figurative expression with a meaning having little to do with the principle theme of the discourse.[692]

How are we then to translate this final clause? Part of the answer depends upon the syntax of *hēmin*, whether it is an indirect object, "concerning whom is the word to us," or a dative of means, "to whom is the word by us." Smillie rejected the former as too contrived and redundant, but thinks the latter has promise, "indicating some sort of reciprocal responsibility towards God on the part of those addressed by his word."[693]

Smillie examined all the places in the New Testament where *logos* is used in the sense of "to render account" with the following conclusions: (1) *logos* is linked with some form of the verb *didōmi* "to give" when this meaning is intended; (2) *logos* is anarthrous (with one exception) in this idiom; and (3) *logos* always appears in the accusative case. In light of this, he found it difficult to see the meaning in Heb 4:13 as "render account" since no form of the verb *didōmi* (or any other verb) is present, *logos* is articular, and it is in the nominative and not the accusative case.[694]

If, as Smillie suggested, the author was engaging in word play in the double use of *ho logos*, then perhaps a colloquial rendering such as "towards whom the word is [now] up to us" contributes towards capturing the author's meaning as well as his means of verbalizing that meaning.[695] Hughes offered a similar translation: "He to whom the Word has been given shall

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[692] G. Smillie, "The Other ΛΟΓΟΣ at the end of Heb. 4:13," NovT 47.1 (2005): 19.

[693] Ibid., 20. Swetnam ("Jesus as Logos," 222) translated it "with whom on our behalf is the Word." Spicq (*L'Épître aux Hebreux*, 91) translated it "the Word, to whom we must render our Word." Others, such as M. Barth ("The Old Testament in Hebrews," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, ed. W. Klassen and G. Snyder [New York: Harper & Row, 1962], 63), find less word play, but take the meaning to be "of whom we speak." Grässer offered the following translation: "Vor dem wir uns zu verantworten haben," which could be rendered "to whom we now have a responsibility to give an answer" (*An die Hebräer* EKKNT 17 [Zurich: Benziger, 1990], 1:239).

[694] Smillie, "The Other ΛΟΓΟΣ," 22.

[695] Ibid., 24.

be required to give a word in return."[6][6] Finally, Smillie mentioned how this interpretation of the phrase harmonizes well with Heb 4:14 where we read: "let us hold firmly to the faith we profess (V "faith we profess)." "Confession" is cognate with "word" in Greek, and both "are invitations to affirm or profess the word the readers have heard.", NI7V "faith we profess)." "Confession" is cognate with "word" in Greek, and both "are invitations to affirm or profess the word the readers have heard."[69]32[7]

Those who interpret *pros hon hēmin ho logos* as "to whom we must give an account," rely on the similar uses found elsewhere in Scripture such as in Luke 16:2 and Heb 13:17. This interpretation is likewise grammatically feasible and harmonizes well with the entire section of 3:7–4:11 and the conclusion of 4:12–13.

In summary, Swetnam found the interpretation of *logos* as Scripture in Heb 4:12–13 exegetically difficult for four reasons. First, the terminology is inconsistent: the change from *logos* as "word" in v. 12 to *logos* as "account" in v. 13 is "bizarre." Second, the imagery is inconsistent. The shift from the penetrating power of the word in v. 12 to that of a sacrifice or wrestling hold in v. 13 is problematic. Third, the description of a "sword" for the image of sacrifice or wrestling hold is inconsistent. Fourth, the language is inconsistent. If *logos* refers to Scripture in Heb 4:12–13, it is difficult to account for the connector *oun* "therefore" in v. 14, since there the high priest theme is brought back into play, but there is no reference to this theme in 4:12–13. Both Attridge and Ellingworth interpreted the conjunction in v. 14 to be resumptive of the thought which has been interrupted since 3:7. Swetnam noted there is no explanation for why the author would do this if this is what he has done.[69]8[8]

But Swetnam veered into less secure territory when he connected the *machaira* in v. 12 with the double-edged knife of circumcision used by Joshua in Josh 5:2 and then took it to refer to the knife of sacrifice used by Abraham in Genesis 22. This "two-edged" knife alludes to the two functions of circumcision (v. 12) and sacrifice (v. 13). That v. 13 should be so interpreted is, according to Swetnam, confirmed by the use of *pros ton theon* "before God" in v. 13 connected with Jesus' high priestly role in v. 14 and his intercessory role in v. 16.[69]9[9] For Swetnam, Heb 4:12 sums up 3:7–4:11, "which discusses the spiritualized promise of land, i.e., God's rest, and

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[696] G. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, 11.

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[697] Smillie, "The Other ΛΟΓΟΣ," 25: "At the end of v. 13, the author says in effect, 'Now it is our turn to return the word to him,' then, in v. 14, he urges the readers to hold fast onto this word they profess."

[698] J. Swetnam, "Context of the Crux," 103–4.

[699] Ibid., 105–6. Although possible, this interpretation seems rather farfetched.

prepares the way for the following part, about Christ's priesthood." The author was implicitly indicating "why entrance into the spiritualized land of God's rest is possible: Jesus, who is equal to God, is able to effect the spiritual circumcision of the heart needed for such an entrance."[700]

Returning to the rest of v. 12, the theme of "living" here ascribed to the Word of God and first introduced in 3:12 occurs six more times in Hebrews (7:8, 25; 9:14; 10:20, 31; 12:22). The forefronting of "living" at the beginning of the clause is emphatic by word order. By the use of "living and active," the author denoted that the Word possesses the power to effect its own utterance.[701] It possesses an energizing power that renders it always effective in accomplishing its purpose. One is reminded of Isa 55:10–11, where the word will not return void but will accomplish God's purpose. In addition, the word of God is emphatically compared to a "double-edged" sword in its power to penetrate the depths of the human soul.

The term here translated "sword," *machaira*, sometimes has the technical meaning of a surgeon's knife or the knife used by the priests to slaughter and carve sacrificial animals. Michaelis argued that the context forbids the translation of "sword" and instead the image drawn is that of a knife used by a priest or butcher, or possibly a surgeon. The priestly usage may be in view in Luke 22:38. Surgeon's knives were sometimes two edged while ordinary knives were not usually so.[702] How fitting would be such imagery if it came from the pen of Luke the physician? If the translation of *machaire* is the "knife" used by the priest to slay the sacrificial animal, then the thought of the passage has greater coherence.

How are we to interpret the division of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow? Ellingworth summarized the four possible meanings.[703] First, the reference could be to a tripartite division of soul, spirit, and body along the lines of 1 Thess 5:23. Second, the division could be between soul and body on the one hand, and between joints and marrow on the other. Third, the division is between each of the four mentioned entities. Fourth, the meaning could be along the lines of "within soul, within spirit," and "between joints and marrow." Spicq inferred from the similarity of this passage to what is said in Philo of the Logos dividing human faculties as proof of Philo's

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[700] Ibid., 107.

[701] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 103.

[702] Michaelis, "μάχαιρα," TDNTa, 573. Both "sharper than" and "two edged" are built on the same Greek root τομός from τέμνω, "to cut." God's speech or word is compared to a sharp sword in Isa 49:2 and Rev 1:16; 19:15, 21.

[703] Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 263. A good discussion of biblical psychology is F. Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology*, 2nd ed., trans. R. E. Wallis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966). His discussion of Heb 4:12 can be found on pp. 109–19.

influence on Hebrews. But as is generally agreed, Williamson has shown that such is not the case.[4]34[4]

Another interpretive issue has to do with whether "joints and marrow" are to be understood literally or figuratively. Most likely a metaphorical sense is intended where the sword or knife of Scripture pierces deep within our bones to probe, even dividing the marrow within.[70]5[5]

The meaning of "laid bare" has been debated since early times. Two views are most likely. It may picture a wrestler using a choke hold on his opponent's neck,[70]6[6] or the neck of the sacrificial animal laid bare for the knife.[7][7][870][9] It is probably better to see a shift from the spoken/written word of 4:12 to God or Jesus in 4:13. Lane noted the correlation with this passage and what was stated in Num 14:43–45 where the exodus generation fell by the sword when they tried to enter Canaan in disobedience to God's word. The readers are threatened by the sword of the word of God, exposing their thoughts and rendering them defenseless before God.[70]35[9]

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS. We are now in a position to consider the theological implications of Hebrews 4:1–13. It seems prudent to note at the outset that the focus on "rest" serves to emphasize the author's contention, initiated in the prologue, that there is continuity between the people of God under the old covenant and under the new covenant. He consistently explained the new covenant in the light of the old covenant. The use of Psalm 95 and the focus on "Today" indicates God, who spoke to the fathers by the prophets, is still speaking today.

A few still champion some form of Käsemann's thesis that the author of Hebrews drew the motif of *katapausis* from antecedents in Philo rather than from the Old Testament, which led to its entry into Christian Gnosticism. For Käsemann, the author of Hebrews used Psalm 95 merely in an attempt "to anchor in Scripture a speculation already in existence."[71]0[0] However, the

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[704] C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hebreux* 1:50–53; Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 386–409.

[705] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 479; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 363.

[706] Grässer, *an die Hebräer*, 1:238–39; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 94.

[707] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 136. See BDAG 1014.

[708] So Grässer, *An Die Hebräer* 1:239–40.

[709] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 102–3; followed by Koester, *Hebrews*, 280.

[710] Käsemann, Wandering *People of God*, 74. For a summary of the debate between Käsemann and Hofius, including the mediating positions, see J. Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You*

majority of scholars tend to agree with Hofius who convincingly argued that the concept of "rest" is found in Jewish thought and is specifically the point of Psalm 95. Although most English commentators like Lane, Ellingworth, and Laansma agreed with Hofius's critique of Käsemann's thesis, they were not necessarily in agreement with Hofius's thesis that the "rest" in Hebrews 3–4 refers to God's resting place in the heavenly temple where Jesus has already entered as a forerunner and where believers will enter and share in an eternal Sabbath celebration around the throne of God.[1]36[1]

Two of the most recent studies on the concept of "rest" in Heb 3:7–4:11 are by Wray and Laansma.[71]2[2] Laansma, in an evaluation of Wray's *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, correctly chided her for suggesting that the author of Psalm 95 made a "hermeneutical leap" by shifting God's promise in Num 14:22–23 from the land to "rest." This is neither a leap nor one performed by the psalmist. The psalmist wrote from within an established tradition which characterized the land as "rest."[3]37[3]

He also disagreed with Wray's conclusion against Hofius, who argued that the term *sabbatismos* is neither identical in meaning nor interchangeable with *katapausis*. Hofius took the meaning to be "the eternal sabbath celebration of salvation, i.e., the perfected community's before God's throne."[71]4[4] On the contrary, Wray took *sabbatismos* as being equivalent to God's rest.[5][5] But Hofius's evidence is solid and makes good sense in the context of Hebrews, especially when read in the light of Heb 12:22–24.

Rest,' " 10–13. For a survey of the discussion beginning with Käsemann until Hofius, see Hofius, *Katapausis*, 5–16 and more recently H. Feld, *Der Hebräerbrief*, EdF 228 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 42–48.

[711] O. Hofius, *Katapausis*; J. Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 117–22; 316. Lane (*Hebrews 1–8*, 102) basically affirms Hofius's thesis.

[712] Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*; Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest.' "*

[713] Laansma, "Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament," 27.

[714] Hofius, *EDNT* 3:219; *Katapausis*, 102–15.

[715] Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 91.

Hofius argued extensively that "rest" in Ps 95:11 means "resting place" and that *katapausis* in its spatial usage is a technical term for the temple in the LXX.X.[6][6] Laansma, however, concluded from Ps 95:11 and from the use of X that it is not tenable to identify in a simple fashion God's "rest" with the temple. He did note "that this noun is used in such a way throughout the LXX that a reader of the Greek would doubtless have a tendency to associate it closely with the temple."[7]38X that a reader of the Greek would doubtless have a tendency to associate it closely with the temple."[71]39[7]

Laansma and Wray also differed over the spatial nature of the concept of *katapausis*. Wray took it in a non-spatial sense while Laansma considered *katapausis* to mean "resting place".[71]8[8] Finally, whereas Wray thought the "rest" motif is dropped after 4:11, Laansma believed that this theme is deeply embedded in the imagery used throughout Hebrews. Wray's study is, according to Laansma, "methodologically flawed" in that she attempts "to work over a *theological theme* in terms of a specific *vocabulary*."[9][9] In spite of this, however, Wray's work is helpful, particularly in its rhetorical analysis of the pericope.

According to Heb 3:7–4:11, God both promised and provided a rest for the people of Israel in the exodus generation. Those who disbelieved and disobeyed did not enter God's Canaan rest. Joshua, Caleb, and the younger generation that believed did enter Canaan rest according to Exod 33:14; Deut 3:20; 5:32–33; and Josh 23:1. But the promise was not exhausted at this time. Psalm 95 indicates the rest was still available some four centuries after its initial promise and provision, implying that "rest" means more than just entrance into the land of Canaan. Such an enlargement of the scope of the original promise was what occurred when Abraham originally received the promise of land and posterity, but the promise was not exhausted in his descendents. It was

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LXX Septuagint

[716] Hofius, *Katapausis*, 49.

LXX Septuagint

LXX Septuagint

[717] Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 59, 99–101, 314–16. This fact has implications for the possible priestly readership as suggested in the introduction.

[718] Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 146; Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 276–83.

[719] Laansma, "Hebrews Use of the Old Testament," 30.

expanded to include all believers in Christ as Gal 3:16, 22, 29 make clear.[720] Whatever the "rest" is in Hebrews, it is distinguished from the land as well as the Sabbath.

The promised land is not equivalent to the promised rest for our author. Moses is twice presented as a model of faithful service to God in Heb 3:2–5 and Heb 11:23–28, yet he along with the wilderness generation failed to enter the promised land before he died. On the other hand, Joshua is identified in Heb 4:8 with the people who failed to enter the rest, though he himself did enter the land and led in the conquering of Canaan. Joshua's name is absent from the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11, although there is mention of the fall of the walls of Jericho, which of course occurred under Joshua's leadership.[721]

In Heb 4:8, we are justified in interpreting the "rest" messianically. When Joshua led the people into Canaan, God gave the people "rest." Yet that was not the final extent of the rest which God had in mind, hence the statement in Psalm 95 and our author's argument which he builds upon this fact. Contrary to Bruce and many others who take the same approach to Heb 4:9, the "rest" is not only what believers enjoy in heaven. That will indeed be "rest," but that is not what the author is suggesting here. Hofius has proven there is a clear eschatological dimension to this metaphor of "rest."[722] But this is not the whole story. The author's goal is to inspire faithfulness in the Christian community today. Hebrews 4:9 is attempting to stir believers on to serve the Lord faithfully while still on the earth.[723] Miller is correct when she said: "It is not the non-fulfillment of the promise that is the point but its non-fulfillment [724], and that the promise is not exhausted by past appropriations or non-appropriations."[725]

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[720] Miller, *Hebrews*, 116.

[721] See the discussion in Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 81.

[722] Hofius, *Katapausis*, 106–10. Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 92, correctly noted: "As careful as the author is to explicate fully the psalm text and to warn against the loss of ENTERING INTO THE REST, the phrase is used rhetorically in the service of the encouragement to faithfulness …" but then incorrectly concluded the sentence with: "… and not as an eschatological doctrine."

[723] So Hewitt, *Hebrews*, 92; and Wray, Rest as a Theological Metaphor, 80. See the overview of positions in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 127–28.

[724] A salient point made by Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor*, 91.

[725] Miller, *Hebrews*, 113.

To make the Old Testament concept of "rest" in the land of Canaan symbolic of heaven alone[726] is problematic for both Calvinists and Arminians on a number of fronts. First, that the exodus generation was barred from entry because of their disobedience is contradictory to the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer. Second, the exodus generation had to work to obtain the inheritance in Canaan, which does not square with the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Third, out of the entire exodus generation, only two men who were over 40 years of age entered the promised rest, Joshua and Caleb. Are we to assume that all of those who died in the wilderness were not a part of God's covenant people, Israel, and thus were eternally lost? Moses himself did not enter the Promised Land because of his own disobedience. Surely no one would think to suggest that he was therefore eternally lost.[727]

Carter made the interesting point that the notion that rest is only referring to heaven may be "a carryover from certain aspects of Roman Catholic theology, according to which there is not and cannot be any certainty of salvation in the present life."[728] Since the author's purpose was to bolster commitment and perseverance in the lives of his hearers, it would seem better to see the "entrance" into the "rest" as being in some sense a present reality for believers.

Thus, it seems best, given all the evidence, to understand the "rest" to have a threefold dimension: the present time, a state entered at death, and that which is experienced by the believer at the eschaton. The already/not yet eschatology of the author makes this interpretation likely.[729] It is difficult to limit the rest to a location or specific point in time. Genesis 2:2 as used by the author indicates God's rest is open ended. The "rest" must be seen as a present reality and not only as a reality at death or in the eschaton. Guthrie raised a salient question: how could

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[726] Many have equated entrance into the land of Canaan with entrance into heaven: Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 196; A. B. Davidson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1959), 91–92; P. Fairbairn, *Typology of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Daniels & Smith, 1952; repr., New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), 2:3–4.

[727] See A. Nairne, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, CGTSC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 67; J. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1992), 56.

[728] C. Carter, "Hebrews," in *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 6:65.

[729] So taken by Attridge, *Hebrews*, 128; D. Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations of Hebrews*, 168–70; G. E. Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, ed. D. Hagner, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 622; and others.

the readers seem to have fallen short of the rest *now* if it lies entirely in the future?[0][0] In that case, all Christians would be "short" of it. Barrett's conclusion perhaps stated it best: "The 'rest,' precisely because it is God's, is both present and future; people enter it, and[173]42[1]

The typological parallel is not between the earthly land as "rest" in the past and the heavenly land as "rest" in the future. Rather, the true typology which the author focused on is that between the two communities, his own and the exodus generation, both of which were confronted by the same word of God.[73]2[2] The "rest" described here is not a "sedating" of human life, a spiritual "retirement," an invitation to quietism, a period of idleness, or immobility as a life style.[3]43[3]

Is *katapausis* a place or a state? Those who take it as a place include Käsemann, Hofius, Weiss, Grässer, and Ellingworth.[73]4[4] Attridge and Lane took it as a state, but Attridge said it might be a place.[5][5] *Sabbatismos* is not so much a locale, but a Sabbath celebration. Laansma concluded "The *katapausis* is construed as a locale as God's own resting place, where he celebrates his own Sabbath.… The salvation thereby described comes to them also as a promise, the promise that they will enter into[673]44[6]

Is *katapausis*, "rest," present or future? Those who take it as a present realization point to the present tense of *eiserchomai* in Heb 4:3 and the eschatological outlook of "already/not yet"

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[730] Guthrie, *Hebrews*,

[731] Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," 372.

[732] Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 97–98; Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 275.

[733] J. M. Lochman, *The Faith We Confess*, trans. D. Lewis (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 254–55.

[734] Käsemann, *Wandering People of God*, 68; Hofius, *Katapausis*, 109–10, Weiss, *Biblical Theology*, 268ff.; Grässer, *An die Hebräer*, 1:209–220; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 235.

[735] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 97. Lane (*Hebrews 1–8*, 98, 102) leaned towards taking it as a state as well.

[736] Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest'."* 334.

throughout the epistle.[737]7[7] Laansma summarized the points made by those who take it primarily in a futuristic sense, although allowing for the present as well. His arguments include the following: (1) the imagery of Psalm 95 suggests a *corporate* entrance into the rest, implying a future entrance; (2) the *katapausis* comes to us as a promise, which suggests future hope; (3) the demand to "strive" to enter the rest appears to place the reader before rather than in the act of entering; (4) if the rest is present, the "works" of Heb 4:10 would seem to be interpreted as something along the lines of "self-justifying works" or "dead works," but this is unlikely since Christians are not in the present at rest from their works; (5) the exhortation as a whole is related to the Parousia contextually in 3:14.[8]8[8] However, in light of Heb 6:4–6 and 12:22–24, Laansma was uncomfortable restricting the meaning to an eschatological rest: "It does seem strange that elsewhere in the epistle he would think in such vivid terms of a present participation in the heavenly world, but think of entrance into the same place *qua katapausis*[973]9[9] Laansma summed up his discussion on the nature of *katapausis*:

> The common use of the word *katapausis* for a 'resting place,' its present usage and context, and the strong testimony in Jewish literature for an other worldly or future resting *place* cumulatively tilt the balance of probability in favor of taking it straightforwardly here as 'resting place.[740]0[0]

The local meaning is probably the best interpretation of the "rest" throughout the entire passage. The connection between *katapausis* and *sabbatismos* is that God's *resting place* is where he enjoys his ongoing *Sabbath celebration*. "It is *in* this place that the people of God will ultimately

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[737] Westcott, *Hebrews*, 95; D. Hagner, *Hebrews*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 49; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 126.

[738] Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 306–7.

[739] Ibid., 310. F. Johnson (*Quotations of the New Testament from the Old* [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1896], 370) noted concerning the "rest" in Hebrews 4 that it is "a universal spiritual experience of those who believe, that it is past, present, and future; past, in the experience of all in every age who have believed; present, in the experience of all who now believe, whether they are on earth on in heaven; and future, as all the blessed spiritual experiences of Christians in this life are foregleams of 'the glory to be revealed.' "

[740] Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 281.

rest from their works … and thus join in the *sabbatismos* (4, 9–10)."[74]1[1] Only on the seventh day, when we enter God's eschatological *sabbatismos*, will we be, as Augustine said, "ourselves."[2]45[2]

Scripture speaks, according to Turretin, of a threefold "sabbath:" (1) a temporal sabbath which included a weekly day, an annual time ever seventh year when the land was to remain uncultivated, and the year of Jubilee which was the forty-ninth year; (2) a spiritual Sabbath, which included cessation from sinful works during their lives; and (3) a heavenly sabbath where we rest eternally with God. Related to this "sabbath" rest, Scripture also speaks of a threefold "rest" in Heb 4:1–11: (1) God's creation rest; (2) Israel's Canaan rest; and (3) a Christian's spiritual and eternal rest, which Turretin apparently takes to include two aspects: the spiritual rest Christians can enjoy now in this life, and eternal rest in heaven. Turretin noted the "rest" in Hebrews 4 cannot refer to creation rest or Canaan rest as these have already passed away. The phrase in v. 3, "although the works were finished since the creation of the world," eliminates creation rest and the statement in 4:8 that Joshua did not lead the people into "rest" obviates Israel's Canaan rest as the meaning. This leaves only one alternative, the conclusion of 4:9, that there remains a rest available which is different from both God's creation rest and Israel's Canaan rest.[74]3[3] It may be that the author chose to use the unusual word *sabbatismos* in 4:9 to indicate that the rest which he intends is not the same as creation rest or Israel's Canaan rest.

Is it conceivable that the "rest" of Heb 4:10 may have reference to a millennial fulfillment? Although the majority of commentators do not think so, several have made this case.[74]4[4] Buchanan's analysis of this section, particularly Heb 4:8–11, challenges the assumptions made by many about the spiritual nature of the rest. He criticized those who make the assumption that God's promise of rest is a purely spiritual and a purely eschatological matter. For example, Buchanan noted F. F. Bruce rejected a millennial interpretation of the rest on the grounds that

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[741] Ibid., 283.

[742] In reference to Augustine's famous quote, "Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee" (*NPNF* 1:45).

[743] F. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. J. Dennison, trans. G. Giger (Philadelphia: P&R, 1994), 2:78–81.

[744] See Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 61–79; Delitzsch, *Hebrews* 1:197ff.; G. H. Lang, *Hebrews*, 77–78; and W. C. Kaiser Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 168–74. They argue for a millennial reference, as does J. Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*.

such is an importation of a concept alien to Hebrews, then went on to chide Bruce for importing his own alien concept, namely, a spiritualizing of the rest.[5][5674]46[6] He continued:

> As Christian believers they will have an inheritance in the land of Canaan in the consummation of the present kingdom if they make every effort to finish their course.… That we should make "every effort" to do this proves that entrance into heaven is not meant. Otherwise a salvation by works is taught![74]7[7]

Dillow drew the conclusion that the content of the inheritance spoken of in Hebrews 3–4 is the millennial land of Canaan. The inheritance-rest is participation with Christ in his millennial reign. "Consistent with its usage throughout the New Testament, the inheritance (rest) must be earned … Not all Christians will make that effort or will make equal effort, and those distinctions will be acknowledged by Christ … during the millennial kingdom."[74]8[8]

The theme of "promise" in Heb 3:7–4:13, which is identified specifically as "entering into rest," reappears in chaps. 11–12. Here it is identified as the promise of a "heavenly city." It is not clear whether the author made or intended his readers to make the connection between the concept of "rest" and the "heavenly city." There is nothing overt in the text which makes this connection.[74]9[9] It is, however, possible that the author had such a connection in mind.

The rest is related to the redemptive work of Christ. When believers cease from their works, they enter rest. The crucial question then is what are these works? It would seem from the immediate context as well as that of the entire book that these "works" are "works of consecration, the faith and obedience required to establish and maintain covenant relationship with God."[75]0[0] This rest is not a ceasing from works of self-righteousness, or from works understood as the requirements of Judaism. Neither is in view in our passage. Spiritual rest is ongoing maturity and perseverance, a community ethic, made possible by faith and obedience. The failure to reach the "rest" in Heb 4:1 is the consequence of the warning given in 3:12.

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[745] Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 72; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 107.

[746] Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*, 108.

[747] Ibid.

[748] Ibid., 109.

[749] So Wray, Rest as a Theological Metaphor, 91, 93. Comparing Heb 4:2 with 11:39–40 and 12:22–24, she said: "The temporal focus of 'today' shifts to a spatial focus. The promise of entering the "rest" … has experienced metamorphosis into the author's true concern, the promise of entering into the heavenly city." Note the similarities in 12:22–24 to 3:7–4:13.

[750] Miller, *Hebrews*, 120.

We may also conclude, based on 3:1–4:13, that the concept of faith for the author of Hebrews includes Jesus as the object of faith in a soteriological sense, and not merely an ethical category of steadfastness based on Jesus' faithfulness as some of suggested.[75]1[1] Jesus is both the object of faith in a soteriological sense as well as the model of faith in a practical sense. This is demonstrated well by V. Rhee from the meaning of *homologia* ("confession") in Heb 3:1, which includes both the apostleship and high priesthood of Jesus; the meaning of "our courage and the hope of which we boast" in Heb 3:6, where the object of our hope is the high priesthood of Jesus; and the references to God's word in 3:7–4:13. Disobeying God's voice (the word of God) is equivalent to failing to receive the message of salvation; the exhortation to "take heed" to God's word simply means to believe the message of salvation in Jesus.[2]47[2]

Another theological issue, which is actually hermeneutical in nature, is how much the author's treatment of Old Testament Scripture in Heb 3:7–4:13 resembles rabbinic midrash. Leschert examined this issue thoroughly and has drawn a number of conclusions. The author's view of the inspiration of Scripture and his application of it to his readers' situation is similar to Jewish midrash. Yet he did not find hidden meanings in Scripture or wrest a text from its context, as is evident from his careful exegetical use of Psalm 95 in the light of Numbers 14. The author's use of the midrashic technique *gezerah shawah*,[75]3[3] in joining Ps 95:11 with Gen 2:2, has long been noted by commentators. It is also possible that the technique *Dabar ha-lamed me-inyano* was used, where the meaning is established by its context.[4]□[4] Leschert[575]48[5]

Eschatologically, Heb 3:7–4:11 is in line with other New Testament authors who consistently take the perspective that the coming age somehow has already begun with the advent of Christ, and thus the two, in a sense, overlap. Sometimes this view of the two ages is presented in linear and historical terms (horizontally) and sometimes in more spatial terms such as heaven and earth (vertically). For the author of Hebrews, the last days began with the first coming of Jesus (Heb

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[751] The case is well argued by V. Rhee, "The Christological Aspects of Faith," 75–88, against Grässer, *Glaube*, 63–66, and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 311–14. For a more detailed presentation, consult V. Rhee, *Faith in Hebrews*.

[752] Rhee, "The Christological Aspects of Faith," 76–83, 88.

[753] An exegetical technique whereby a term in one verse is interpreted according to its use in another.

[754] Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations of Hebrews*, 188–90.

[755] Ibid., 197.

1:1–2) and culminate in the second coming (9:23–28). As Laansma well noted, the author of Hebrews placed more of the emphasis on the "vertical" perspective, especially in chaps. 8–12.[75]6[6] Why does the author do this? Laansma speculated this is his rhetorical strategy for dealing with the problem of the present sufferings of the church in light of the new covenant salvation which is going to effect ultimate deliverance from such sufferings. All present appearances to the contrary, this new covenant salvation, about which the Scriptures spoke, is the only salvation there ever has been and that will ever be.[7]49[7]

In light of the available evidence, it seems best to conclude that the author of Hebrews is not dependent upon Philo, Gnosticism, or Jewish apocalyptic for his theology of rest in Hebrews 3–4. He was "a serious student of the OT who is drawing out of the text what he believes to be embedded in it."[75]8[8] Hebrews 3:7–4:11 presents a distinctly Christian interpretation of the Old Testament.

Another theological implication of these verses has to do with progressive creationism. The inclusion of Gen 2:2 in Heb 4:4 paves the way for the argument that the creative days of Gen 1 are not to be understood as literal 24-hour days, but rather as successive epochs of perhaps millions of years. Since God's rest is equated with the seventh day of creation, and his rest extends from the completion of creation until now, then this seventh day is, according to progressive creationists, obviously not a 24-hour day. If the seventh day was not literally 24 hours in length, then neither are the other six.[75]9[9]

But there are problems with this reasoning. When one considers the grammar of Gen 2:2 in the LXX and what is stated in Heb 4:4, the most that can be said is that God rested on the seventh day. Nothing is said as to whether this rest in some way continues to the present time, nor is there any indication as to how long the rest lasted if it is not still somehow in progress. All that can be said for sure is that God rested from his creative work in the past. If the aorist tense is ingressive, as is likely, the focus is on the inception of the rest, not on the duration of it or whether it corresponds to the seventh day. There are no exegetical grounds for suggesting that the seventh day of creation is still in effect.X and what is stated in Heb 4:4, the most that can be said is that God rested on the seventh day. Nothing is said as to whether this rest in some way continues to the present time, nor is there any indication as to how long the rest lasted if it is not still somehow in progress. All that can be said for sure is that God rested from his creative work in the past. If the aorist tense is ingressive, as is likely, the focus is on the

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[756] J. Laansma, "Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament," 8.

[757] Ibid., 9.

[758] Laansma, *" 'I Will Give You Rest,' "* 356.

[759] E.g., H. Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 49.

LXX Septuagint

inception of the rest, not on the duration of it or whether it corresponds to the seventh day. There are no exegetical grounds for suggesting that the seventh day of creation is still in effect.[0]50[0]

In drawing the discussion to a close, the author of Hebrews clearly thought the first generation of Jewish Christians found themselves in a parallel situation with their exodus generation counterparts. Forty years of wilderness wandering was the lot of the exodus generation prior to entrance into the land. From the crucifixion of Jesus until the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans was also a period of forty years. Both groups lived in what might be called the "formative" years of a new movement of God in their midst. Whereas the exodus generation benefited from the leadership of Moses and Joshua, now the new people of God have a leader who is far superior, namely Jesus. To fail to respond to him in faith would have disastrous consequences as in the wilderness failure of the exodus generation. If Hebrews was written during the turbulent times of the Jewish War (AD 66–70), and specifically toward the end of that period, it is not unlikely that the author reflected upon the watershed event of the exodus generation at Kadesh Barnea and used it typologically or analogically with his present generation of Jewish Christians. The "today" which the author takes up from Psalm 95 is invested with ultimate significance.

Structurally, Heb 4:13 concludes the first major section of the epistle, which is bracketed (i.e., an *inclusio*) by God speaking in a Son in the prologue and speaking in his Word in 4:12–13. Theologically, v. 13 indicates something else as well. Christ's high priesthood, which plays such a key role in the epistle, actually develops out of the revelation of Jesus as "Son." He is able to be "high priest" because he is first a "Son."[76]1[1]

From an overall discourse perspective, we can now see how the author has very carefully made the case that Jesus is exalted above angels and Moses because of his high-priestly office and mediatorial work. If we remember that the entire discourse unit of 1:5–4:13 is bisected into two sections with the second section beginning in 3:1, we are able to discern a parallel structure developed by the author between these two sections. Christ is superior to the angels in Heb 1:5–14, and he is superior to Moses in 3:1–6. The exhortation in 2:1–4 is paralleled by the exhortation in 3:7–19. In 2:5–18, Jesus raised humanity beyond the status of angels, and in 4:1–13 he did what Moses and Joshua failed to do: bring his people into true "rest." He is our high priest who helps us in Heb 2:17–18, and he is again the same in Heb 4:14–16[51]

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[760] This argument is articulated in A. Kulikovsky, *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 13.2 (1999): 61–62.

[761] 76 So noted by T. Häring, "Über einige Grundgedankedes Hebräerbriefes," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie*, 17 (1921): 261–62.

[51] David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 283–99.