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**The Warning Passages in Hebrews: Exhortations  
Written Using Deliberative Rhetoric to a Community of Faith**

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the Faculty of the Liberty University School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Bible Exposition

by  
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## APPROVAL SHEET

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Written Using Deliberative Rhetoric to a Community of Faith

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## ABSTRACT

Different interpretative approaches (historical-cultural, social-scientific, intertextual, oral-critical, rhetorical) and methodologies are applied when the so-called warning passages in the book of Hebrews get interpreted. Inevitably, these different interpretative methodologies have created different perspectives or views that the original author may not have intended, and that the audience may not have gathered.

The author of Hebrews was seeking to help the audience of his writings understand a new position through his extensive use of the Greek word κρείττων (*kreittōn*). Similarly, a Greek background is also evident because of the tremendous use of classical rhetoric within the Epistle. In addition, it is also noticeable that the author massively used a classical Greek literary tool called the ὑπέρβατον (*hyperbaton*), which was prolific during the Hellenistic period within the classical Greek rhetorical genre. Finally, a Hebrew background is apparent in the readers because of the copiously used OT references. These OT examples from the past were chosen purposefully by the author to lead the audience to a specific future.

As a result, a dual analysis of the Epistle should consider the two different backgrounds that the book of Hebrews enjoys (a blend of two distinct cultures) to arrive at a very different interpretation of the book other than where scholarship finds itself now. The Hebrew and Greek cultures blended into one just as the people needed to see themselves together in a new covenant position. The currents of biblical research show that blended exposition is not only feasible but the next logical step of exposition particularly within debated passages.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ABD</b>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D.N. Freedman. 6 vols.</i>
<b>A.D.</b>	<i>Anno Domini</i>
<b>AJSR</b>	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>
<b>ANET</b>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Text</i>
<b>ASV</b>	<i>American Standard Version</i>
<b>B.C.</b>	<i>Before Christ</i>
<b>BDY</b>	<i>Darby Translation</i>
<b>CSB</b>	<i>Christian Standard Bible</i>
<b>Dtr</b>	<i>Deuteronomistic</i>
<b>ESV</b>	<i>English Standard Version</i>
<b>EvJ</b>	<i>Evangelical Journal</i>
<b>Et al.</b>	<i>Et alii, and others</i>
<b>G.K.</b>	<i>Greek, referring to the lexical form</i>
<b>HNV</b>	<i>Hebrew Names Version</i>
<b>HPB</b>	<i>Hyperbaton</i>
<b>JPS</b>	<i>Jewish Publication Society</i>
<b>KJV</b>	<i>King James Version</i>
<b>LLC</b>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<b>LLX</b>	<i>Septuagint</i>
<b>LSB</b>	<i>Legacy Standard Bible</i>
<b>MT</b>	<i>Masoretic Text</i>
<b>MGNT</b>	<i>Morphological Greek New Testament</i>

<b>NA<sup>27</sup></b>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland, 27<sup>th</sup> ed.</i>
<b>NASB95</b>	<i>New American Standard Bible 1995</i>
<b>NASB20</b>	<i>New American Standard Bible 2020</i>
<b>NCP</b>	<i>New Christian Position</i>
<b>NET</b>	<i>New English Translation</i>
<b>NIV</b>	<i>New International Version</i>
<b>NKJV</b>	<i>New King James Version</i>
<b>NLT</b>	<i>New Living Translation</i>
<b>NT</b>	<i>New Testament</i>
<b>OT</b>	<i>Old Testament</i>
<b>RSV</b>	<i>Revised Standard Version</i>
<b>RVR60</b>	<i>Reina Valera 1960</i>
<b>SUPRA</b>	<i>As discussed above</i>
<b>TR</b>	<i>Textus Receptus</i>
<b>UBS<sup>4</sup></b>	<i>The Greek New Testament, United Bible Societies, 4<sup>th</sup></i>
<b>VUL</b>	<i>Latin Vulgate</i>
<b>WEB</b>	<i>Webster's Bible</i>
<b>WP</b>	<i>Warning Passage</i>
<b>YLT</b>	<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The expression *warning passages* is prevalent in today's academic discussions about the book of Hebrews. These five texts (Hebrews 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; and 12:14–29) are some of the most prominent features of the Epistle, and yet, the word warning *νουθετοῦντες* or transliterated as (*nouthetountes*) is surprisingly absent from the text.<sup>1</sup> The word warned *χρηματίζω* (*chrematizo*) occurs three times (8:5; 11:7, and 12:25) in the Epistle and only once in the passages that bear the name. Such infrequent use by the biblical author does not match the word's widespread use by modern scholars.

Besides the lack of presence in the text, the terminology is ambiguous. The phrase "warning passages" begs the question: What is the danger? This question is so implicit that many commentaries will go straight to answer it with some postulate; however, there are three more foundational questions for the proper interpretation. First, where is the genesis of this expression? Second, how were the passages understood in church history before the warning passages label was attached? Third, what is the standard view today? Answering these three questions will inevitably guide a reader through the trajectory of the usage of the phrase.

### The Genesis of the Expression "Warning Passages"

From where did the expression "warning passages" come? Before the nineteenth century, this specific vocabulary was not part of theological writings.<sup>2</sup> John Edward Field was the first to

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical references have been sourced from the English Standard Version Text Edition, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Extensive research throughout the spectrum of current and past scholarship relating to the Epistle to the Hebrews yielded no specific results concerning the first named scholar to use the phrase warning passages in their scholarship.

write about warning passages in Hebrews in 1882.<sup>3</sup> However, this work was a concerted effort by the Catholic Church to show that the early Church perhaps was warned by passages about liturgy and to affirm transubstantiation as the proper interpretation of the Eucharist. Still, this topic was only applicable to the Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup> The idea of warning passages did not spread further at that time to other denominations.

F. F. Bruce started the more contemporary idea of warning passages in 1964, and similar writers who agreed with this view later popularized it.<sup>5</sup> While Bruce never indicated his reasons for introducing warning passages into mainstream scholarship, these beliefs perhaps are tied to his Open Brethren upbringing.<sup>6</sup> Bruce republished his work on Hebrews in 1990 and reiterated the same paradigm, which was no longer novel. Knowing the expression's origin allows one to move on to the next question.

### **Prior Understanding**

How were these passages understood before modern terminology? The answer to this section will cover church history in periods: the Early Church (100–300 AD), the Constantinople Church (300–600 AD), the Byzantine Church (600–1000 AD), the East and West Church (1000–1500 AD), The Reformation Church (1500–1700 AD), the Revival and Missions Church (1700–

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<sup>3</sup> John Edward Field, *The Apostolic Liturgy, and the Epistle to the Hebrews: Being a Commentary on the Epistle in its Relation to the Holy Eucharist with Appendices on the Liturgy of the Primitive Church* (London: Rivingtons, 1882), 283.

<sup>4</sup> Reinhard H. Utter, *Aquinas on Transubstantiation: The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist*. Vol. 13. (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019), 35–40.

<sup>5</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1964, 1990), 148. Bruce was also credited for the paradigm by William L Lane, *Hebrews*. Vol. 47 A–B. (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1991) who referenced a 1980 dissertation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary by A. Price entitled, "An Interpretation into the Importance of Perseverance in the Christian Life as presented in the Five Warning Passages in Hebrews."

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Pickering, "F. F. Bruce as a Fellow-Elder", *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* 22 (Nov. 1971), 15. The brethren teach that the consequence of human sin is condemnation to eternal death in hell; hence warnings, or warning passages, are the perfect conduit to bring about repentance.

1900 AD), and the Modern Church (1900–Present). The goal is not to review specific documents produced during the time—which could be voluminous at best—but rather to reflect on a consensus of the era related to the issue of the warnings in Hebrews and to see how the general Church understood the warnings in Hebrews.

### **Early Church 100–300 AD**

The sociological behavior of the people who made up the community influenced the Early Church period. Historians refer to this era as the communal *ethos*.<sup>7</sup> During this time, writings, specifically pseudepigraphical ones that would be considered warnings, were related to abstaining from sinful practices and avoiding evildoers who did not follow the teachings of Jesus and nothing more.<sup>8</sup> Also, in this era, a warning would include the message that following Jesus could lead to suffering for one's beliefs.<sup>9</sup> The same trifold idea seems to be confirmed by the message found in the New Testament; a believer can avoid sin and evildoers but cannot avoid suffering.

### **Constantinople Church 300–600 AD**

The Constantinople Church era adopted a Nicene view of Christianity. The Church considered heretical views illegal, and warnings appear to adhere to orthodoxy.<sup>10</sup> Warnings might also be a part of sermons from church leaders, such as John Chrysostom; however,

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Barton "The Communal Dimension of Early Christianity: A Critical Survey of The Field." *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1992, pp. 399-427.

<sup>8</sup> Jan G. Watt, van der. *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, Vol. Beiheft 141 (Berlin Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> A. M. Madsen, *The Theology of the Cross in Historical Perspective* (Wipf and Stock Publications, Eugene: OR, 2007), 46–58.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Halsall, "Theodosian Code XVI.i.2," *Medieval Sourcebook: Banning of Other Religions* (Fordham University, 1997).

warnings were not specific to any interests of Hebrews. Instead, warnings were about who God was and how God saved. In essence, the Constantinople Church continued with the same sentiments but also added to the penal law of the Church.<sup>11</sup>

John Chrysostom—a fourth-century classical Greek rhetorician and preacher—noted the effective use of rhetoric by the author of Hebrews. In his sermons, Chrysostom mentioned "warning" several times, but never the phrase warning passages.<sup>12</sup> During these centuries of church history, minor differences in the translation or interpretation of the book of Hebrews appeared because of the dwindling knowledge of the classical Greek rhetorical presentation of the epistle.<sup>13</sup>

### **Byzantine Church 600–1000 AD**

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church moved into a new period with a greater emphasis on Byzantine Christianity. The Church continued asceticism among believers. While the concept of self-denial influenced the theology of the time, it did not significantly impact the interpretation of Hebrews. Christianity was a considerable part of the economic and political power that the Empire enjoyed.<sup>14</sup> As a result, a schism concerning different interpretations of

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<sup>11</sup> Rafael Domingo, "Penal Law in the Roman Catholic Church," *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 20, no. 2 (2018): 158–172.

<sup>12</sup> Erik M. Heen, Philip D. Krey, and Thomas C. Oden, *Hebrews*. Vol. 10 (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 129, 200, 233. The first warning was given to "everyone who is not yet free of the vexations of the flesh," this was used rhetorically as Chrysostom wrote that the Hebrews believed that "unless someone has attained a perfect and mature age, he is not even permitted to hold the book." This warning was used in a historical sense using rhetoric. The other two warnings were not futuristic but historical, or as properly called hortatory.

<sup>13</sup> The effects of the diaspora were seen more and more in relation to the departure from the understood language to a more complex ideologies so the quest for proper interpretation emerged; see John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*: MPG vol. 18: 234.; John Chrysostom, "OMIAIA IB," in J.P. Mingne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, 63 (Paris, 1862), 423.

<sup>14</sup> Charles G. Herberman, et al., eds. (1907). "The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 1: Aachen–Assize (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

some scriptures appeared.<sup>15</sup> But this schism had nothing to do with warning passages found in the book of Hebrews.

### **The East and West Church 1000–1500 AD**

The divisions within the Church led to a split between East and West.<sup>16</sup> While the different churches took different interpretations of various doctrines, there was no recorded conflict in the warning passages in Hebrews. During this time, it appeared that the churches had to conform to Latin practices; if they did not, perhaps they had to close.<sup>17</sup> The Bible was divided into chapters and verses, creating the framework for identifying the passages this way. The division is known to this date as apportionment.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Reformation Church 1500–1700 AD**

The Protestant Reformation is where Protestants, mainly Lutheran and Reformed followers, led the challenge to the Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> The Protestant Reformation thought that all believers, not just church officials, should be able to read and interpret the Bible. John Calvin

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<sup>15</sup> Andreas Westergren, "The Ascetic Twist: Comparing Reformation Theology and the Byzantine Heritage." *Studia Theologica* 74, no. 1 (2020): 94–129.

<sup>16</sup> F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford and New York, 1957); Adolf Von Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, 3rd ed. trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (London, 1894–99); K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols. (New York, 1938 – 45); George Jefferis Jordan, *The Inner History of the Great Schism of the West: A Problem in Church Unity*. (New York: B. Franklin, 1972), 58; Walter Ullmann, *The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Ecclesiastical History*. (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), 210; Anna M. Cox, "The Great Schism: The Great Divide of the West, the East and Christianity." *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 6, no. 3 (2018): 55.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Dragani, *Adrian Fortescue and the Eastern Christian Churches*. (Gorgias Studies in Religious Studies, 2005), 22; John C. Dwyer, *Church History: Twenty Centuries of Catholic Christianity*. (Paulist Press, 1998), 30.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *In Omnes D. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria*, 2 (Taurini: Petri Marietti, 2924), 288.

<sup>19</sup> An example is when some Lutherans presented the Augsburg Confession to Emperor Charles V in 1530, see Alan Ludwig, "Luther's Catholic Reformation". *The Lutheran Witness*, 2016.

was a prolific writer during the Reformation.<sup>20</sup> Calvin alluded in his commentary to the book of Hebrews that the writer warned (c.f. Hebrews 4:7; 6:6; 10:39; 12:13, 15, 17) readers, but he had no efforts to construct a theology around them.<sup>21</sup> The most modern debate about warnings is incompatible with his TULIP teachings, such as the Perseverance of the Saints, which is the P of the acronym. Similarly, Martin Luther wrote nine times about warnings in his works but never divided up a warning passage *per se* from Hebrews.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Revival and Missions Church 1700–1900 AD**

After the Reformation, the Church spread to the new world and eventually the entire globe.<sup>23</sup> The Bible was printed and studied in many languages. During this time, scholarship of the book of Hebrews often related to authorship and audience.<sup>24</sup> The question of by whom and to whom the book alludes goes back to the earliest times, and no answer has been satisfactory for everyone.<sup>25</sup> Instead, a variety of views exist.<sup>26</sup> It is natural that when scholars analyzed the pericopes in the mid–1900s, they created a spectrum of positions.

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<sup>20</sup> Jean Calvin, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, and Calvin Translation Society. *Calvin's Commentaries*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), 68; Jean. Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1958).

<sup>21</sup> Calvin, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, 72.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther, and William R. Russell. *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Word and Sacrament*, vol. 35 of Luther's Works, ed. E. Theodore Bachman. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Freeman, *A New History of Early Christianity*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Wilhelm Pratscher, *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Pier Franco Beatrice, "The "Gospel According to the Hebrews" in the Apostolic Fathers." *Novum Testamentum* 48, no. 2 (2006): 147–195.

<sup>25</sup> These scholars are not part of this era, but they all comment on them, see D.A. Carson, "New Testament Theology," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 810; Barnabas Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," *NTS* 35 (1989): 382–406; George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); Andrew H. Trotter Jr., *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Katja Kujanpää, "Scriptural Authority and Scriptural Argumentation in 1 Clement." *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 1 (2020): 125–143.

With this historical understanding, of the trajectory of the phrase, the reader can address the current state. Since the spectrum of positions are directly tied to published works, it is fitting to think of it as sort of a review of literature.

### **Current State - Literary Review**

How are the warning passages viewed today? Fortunately, contemporary scholarship has many answers concerning how these pericopes, referred to as warning passages, could be interpreted. For example, editor Herbert Bateman asked this same question to develop a frame of reference.<sup>27</sup> This book presented and debated four views, one by each contributor. A synopsis is necessary because his publication has become a widely read book on the topic and a springboard for understanding the current state.

### **The Four Views**

A multiple-position situation defines modern times. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, scholars conducted significant studies on the structure of Hebrews. As was seen in an earlier question, the term warning passage was coined for publication and grew in popularity when scholars wrote more books. Following Bateman and Cockerill, four views have emerged: (1) The Classical Reformed View, (2) The Classical Arminian View, (3) The Wesleyan Arminian View, and (4) The Moderate Reform View. These four views are not meant to be comprehensive treatments but are more of a field synopsis.

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<sup>27</sup> Although not the first book to speak in terms of warning passages, it appears that popular discussion today comes from the review of a book: Herbert W. Bateman and Gareth Lee Cockerill, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2007).

## The "Classical Reformed View" Synopsis<sup>28</sup>

The first and possibly the most recognized view is the Classical Reformed View. Since Arminian theology is also a product of the Reformation, it is called the Augustinian-Calvinist view. Calvinism strongly emphasizes the Perseverance of the Saints; from this point of view, no elect believer would fall away from the faith. The warnings against apostasy are covenantal, with the divine will superseding personal choices.<sup>29</sup> The reformed corner acknowledges that the warning passages are some of Epistle's most enigmatic and perplexing verses.<sup>30</sup> However, they agree that the most prudent approach when interpreting these warning passages is to consider the four or five elements they have in common.<sup>31</sup> Although not explicitly acknowledged by the view, these elements appear to have similarities with the covenant formulary of the Old Testament; this research will discuss this idea later. Buist M. Fanning discusses the synthetic approach, which uses four or five elements which they all have in common.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is probably best referred to as the Augustinian-Calvinist view, as there are other "reformed" views, like Jacobus Arminius who did not share the AC view.

<sup>29</sup> The concept of apostasy was apparently prevalent during antiquity, see Jeremy M. Schott, "Living Like a Christian, but Playing the Greek: Accounts of Apostasy and Conversion in Porphyry and Eusebius 1," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1, no. 2 (2008): 258, wherein some reputed apostasy from Hellenism and alleged abandonment of Christianity for philosophy.

<sup>30</sup> Bateman and Cockerill, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 173.

<sup>31</sup> Scot McKnight, "The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions," *Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (1992): 25. Fanning adopts McKnight's four elements (which will be covered later) and adds an additional element solely on the suggestion that pastoral encouragement is very prevalent in Hebrews 5:11–6:20, one of the identified warning passages by reformed theologians. The main idea behind the reformed theologian concerning the warning passages is best expressed by the warnings in the book of Hebrews about apostasy vs. the exhortation about perseverance are "intended" to urge the readers to maintain "faith" in Christ, which is their High Priest, and not to provoke fear that they may somehow lose their standing before God. Conversely, those who do, were never partakers in the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and they must adhere to the consequences which the author exposes with historical data.

<sup>32</sup> Bateman and Cockerill, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 175.

### The "Classical Arminian View" Synopsis<sup>33</sup>

The Classical Arminian View, in contrast, emphasizes personal choice. The proponents hold that salvation is by grace and not by works. In this view, the author of Hebrews tells his readers that apostasy rejects faith resulting in the loss of salvation. A believer's choice to turn away from God is an unpardonable sin for which there is no possibility of repentance on eternal judgment.<sup>34</sup> This view is the loss of salvation view. Or, as stated above, Scot McKnight eloquently puts it, "The loss of final, eschatological salvation" view. This interpretation seems to have no differentiation in applying the OT to the NT.<sup>35</sup>

### The "Wesleyan Arminian View" Synopsis<sup>36</sup>

This view's main argument is that a person can synergize concerning their salvation simply by committing apostasy, which cuts them from the source of salvation.<sup>37</sup> The Wesleyan

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<sup>33</sup> Thom Schreiner best refer to this view as the "Loss of Salvation" view. Scot McKnight calls it "The loss of final, eschatological salvation" view.

<sup>34</sup> A proponent for the idea of the unpardonable sin was David A. DeSilva, but he was followed by Osborne see David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews."* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.), 104; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew, Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament* (Zondervan, 2010), p. 680. Osborn also mentions the new covenantal relationship, but he falls short of recognizing what the author of Hebrews was doing with the continual approach in Hebrews 4:16; 7:25; 10:1; 11:6; 12:18, 22, which covered a new bold worship, a true heart, fullness of faith, certainty that God will hear and the cleansed of heart because of salvation. But he stops there and does not elaborate further on this point. He identifies this as "cultic" language and cites John M. Scholer, "Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JSNT Sup* 49 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 125–31 (cf. 95–149).

<sup>35</sup> The Classical Arminian is the main critic of the Classical Reformed view, but they would agree with Schreiner that the "works" are the outworking of grace such that the vast majority are saved, see I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, and Ian Paul. *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters and Revelation*. Third ed. Vol. 2. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021), 306–25. Apostasy is rare though possible.

<sup>36</sup> The *Anti-Eternal Security* hold to synergistic salvation, based on Paul and John's use of the term *συνεργός* in multiple places in the context of being a "co-worker" for the gospel (1 Thess 3:2; 1 Cor 3:9; Col 4:11; 3 John 1:8). I. Howard Marshall attempts to position his view between the Arminian and Calvinist views by adopting this called Wesleyan view; see I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1974), 24.

<sup>37</sup> There is a subtle distinction made by some Arminians which differentiates from the Wesleyan Arminian in that the former believe that the book of Hebrews has two perspectives in relation to the audience: one is a pastoral perspective and the other one is God's perspective, while the latter does not believe that the author would base such

Arminian view has a similar understanding that people can lose salvation. Wesleyans have a more substantial doctrine of perfection connected to the synergy of salvation. Those who work out their salvation will not commit apostasy, and those who are apostates will not seek repentance. The Wesleyan position argues that the genuine concern should not be on whether a person accepted Christ but on the state of a person's life. What distinguishes Wesleyanism is its doctrine of perfection in this life.<sup>38</sup>

### **The "Moderate Reformed View" Synopsis<sup>39</sup>**

The fourth view is the Moderate Reformed View. Like the Reformed view, apostasy will not lead to a loss of salvation. Instead, the judgment is more physical. This position has underlying assumptions that the readers are genuine believers from a Jewish background struggling to leave the old ways. The author argued with familiar imagery; they understood that failure to follow the instructions of God would lead to earthly punishment, just as it did with the first temple. In other words, the historical setting of the book of Hebrews is crucial for proper interpretation, perhaps not intended as a recapitulation.<sup>40</sup>

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writings simply on matters of relationship as DeSilva described in patron/client relationships in his book: David A. DeSilva, *Hebrews 6:4–8: A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation*, 230 – 35. The direction of a person's life is the key to deciding on whether a person has accepted Christ.

<sup>38</sup> Notwithstanding the concept of perfection, it appears that a synergistic salvation of sorts has been inculcated within the interpretation, and perhaps a sense of loss has been misapplied to the process of salvation, even though it was done by Christ who is the author (Heb 2:10).

<sup>39</sup> This Moderate Reformed view has an intricacy in that both Calvin and Arminius agree on the premise that the warnings apply to the "unforgivable" sin against the Holy Spirit: Bateman and Cockerill, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 336.

<sup>40</sup> The Moderate Reformed View focuses more on the original context of the book rather than the theological traditions as of the Reformed platform. See Randall C. Gleason, "The Old Testament Background of the Warning in Hebrews 6:4–8," *BSac* 155 (1998): 62–91; idem, "The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7–4:11," *BSac* 157 (2000): 281–303; and idem, "The Eschatology of the Warning in Hebrews 10:26–31," *TynBul* 53 (2002): 97–120.

While the four views provide a popular approach, the overview reveals a lower common denominator. Most scholarship stands on one side or the other of a more apparent dichotomy: eternal security and anti-eternal security. Writers in the eternal security camp look at the passages and interpret them with a broader understanding of their theology. Since they do not believe in losing salvation, the warning passages would not teach that idea. The Anti-Eternal Security camp scholars point directly to the texts in Hebrews as theological support. They advocate that the imagery and terminology support a loss-of-salvation view. Despite the abundance of material, a line is drawn with only two sides, resulting in a dichotomy that needs further explanation.

### **Resulting Dichotomy**

The resulting dichotomy has brought about a contrast where scholars have introduced two leading positions. The first position believes that although there are warning passages in the book of Hebrews, this does not negate the assurance in Christ. This first category includes scholars who agree that true believers are not at risk of losing their salvation but differ on what can be lost. On the one hand, some scholars believe there is a loss-of-rewards view.<sup>41</sup> These scholars distinguish salvation as a present possession (Luke 7:50; John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). But rewards are future attainments (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12). On the other hand, there is a subset of scholars that share the means of salvation view, which breaks down salvation into something that they already have and do not yet have; thus, the warnings are admonitions that call for a faith that endures receiving the price. On the can't lose salvation side, there are false believers, loss of

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<sup>41</sup> The first writing that appears to mention the loss of reward view can be found in The New Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1235. Later, Charles C. Ryrie stated that salvation was a free gift, but rewards for those who are saved are earned: The Ryrie Study Bible, NASB (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 1730.

rewards, and hypothetical camps, which are named tests of genuineness view, the loss of rewards view, and the hypothetical loss of salvation view.<sup>42</sup>

The second position believes that these warning passages illustrate anti-eternal security teachings. Overall, scholars believe that the warning passages are crucial to whether a person who enjoyed salvation can backslide and repudiate Christ, known as apostasy.<sup>43</sup> This second category has scholars that propose that because of these warning passages in the book of Hebrews, they cannot support the biblical teachings of eternal security, which has been called the loss-of-salvation view. On a spectrum, they all fall within camps where a Christian may abandon the race, leave the faith, fail to persevere in faith, or apostatize and lose salvation. While the dichotomy encompasses theology, exposition can address it.

## Recent Scholarship

While the theological dichotomy is the answer to the third question about the current state of research, it deserves a follow-up question. How has recent scholarship sought to deal with the current state? Since using the term eternal security has resulted in a dichotomy, newer approaches have offered alternative nomenclature and clarification. Examples of attempts at more precise descriptions include Tension, Assurance, and Caution, which have supported theological posturing. Synthetical approaches describe these efforts.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The two schools and five different perspectives can be seen by one book, see Schreiner, *The Race Set Before Us*, 21–38.

<sup>43</sup> See Bateman and Cockerill, *Four Views on the Warning Passages*, 237, where a Wesleyan Arminian Response was formulated; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47a (Dallas: Word, 1991), 1; Grant R. Osborne, “The Christ of Hebrews and Other Religions,” *JETS* 46.2 (2003): 249–54; C.R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 65–67; Albert Vanhoye, *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1989), 24.

<sup>44</sup> For example, the term *tension* in relation to the book of Hebrews was used by Bateman when he stated, “The purpose of *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* seeks to expose existing *tensions* and provide various ways in which four scholars with differing theological grids interpret them in the literary and historical context of Hebrews” (Bateman and Cockerill, *The Purpose of Four Views*, 175). The term *assurance* was used by

Thomas R. Schreiner gives the first example of theological posturing. He explained that Tension appears in his means of salvation view within the first category of scholars. His view is a mediating position between the Augustinian-Calvinist and Arminian views.<sup>45</sup> He explained the means of salvation view in a series of published works chronologically.<sup>46</sup> His central point is that no genuine believer will ever apostatize. It shows a lack of synergism related to soteriology. This belief falls squarely against the view that anyone could lose their salvation, even the elect, because of assurance.<sup>47</sup> Even if proven by the text in the Epistle to the Hebrews, any security to the people of God may disappear by any warning passages against apostasy within the Epistle—a puzzle Schreiner solves by calling it Tension.

The second example comes from D. A. Carson, who has indicated that Christian Assurance "has not received, in decades, the attention it deserves" because it no longer carries the question within it that once had religious importance. But no theological systems can test this

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Schreiner in his book *The Race Set Before Us* to explain perseverance of the Saints. Conversely, the term *caution* is used by the proponents of apostasy in that they see it as a real danger to believers.

<sup>45</sup> For the different views, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and a Proposal," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2 (1998): 32–34. He differentiates between the five popular views as it relates to the warning passages: 1) the Loss of Salvation view 2) the Loss of Reward view 3) the Test of Genuineness view 4) the Hypothetical view and 5) the Irresolvable view. Schreiner criticizes these five popular views and proposes a new view the Means of Salvation view.

<sup>46</sup> The five published works in chronological order of their publication are, Thomas R. Schreiner, "Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and a Proposal," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2 (1998); Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Run to Win the Prize: Perseverance in the New Testament* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010); Idem, "Warning and Assurance: Run the Race to the End," *The Perfect Savior: Key Themes in Hebrews*, ed. Jonathan Griffiths (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012), pp. 89 – 106; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Andreas J. Kostenberger, and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation* Nashville: Holman Reference, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> This assurance is based on a covenantal position. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 608; Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 150–57; Greg L. Bahnsen, *The Theonomic Reformed Approach to Law and Gospels: Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. Wayne Strickland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 93–143; Knox Chambling, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 181–202.

Assurance concept as biblically theological.<sup>48</sup> He mainly teaches that assurance is based not on the intensity of faith but on the object of faith. As it relates to the book of Hebrews, although this *assurance* is a word found within the Epistle, the structure of the argument, inculcating warning passages, places a believer in a quandary; if a warning passage exists, then it would negate any assurance.

J. B. Rowell gives the third example of theological posturing. He asserts that Christians can lose their reward, among other things, and this reward could be their salvation unless a believer uses caution.<sup>49</sup> Caution is common terminology used today. But caution does not appear, as a word, in the Epistle. His argument survives on the imposition of ideas to the text. Similarly, other scholars use caution in their positions. One is DeSilva, who has an interesting view regarding synergistic soteriology.<sup>50</sup> DeSilva argues that:

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<sup>48</sup> D. A. Carson, "Reflections on Christian Assurance," *WTJ* 54 (1992): 1.

<sup>49</sup> The controversy regarding eternal security covers a vast number of scholars, too many to mention, but the typical controversy between Calvinist and Armenians sums up their arguments. History tells us that the Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609) and his historic supporters known as *Remonstrance*, continued and maintained the original Arminian view. The Arminian view, inclusive of the Classical Arminian position and Wesleyan-Arminian (Methodist) position, opposes any concept of eternal security, holding that a true Christian can fall from grace and be condemned to hell. See Robert Shank. *Life in the Son* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989), 31–48; Michael Scott Horton and J. Matthew Pinson. *Four Views on Eternal Security*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002); Roger E. Olson "Don't Hate Me because I'm Arminian." *Christianity Today* (Washington) 43, no. 10 (1999): 87–87; Matthew McAfee "Kept for Jesus: What the NT really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 4 (2015): 858; Clark H. Pinnock, *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1989); William Hasker, "Philosophical Arminianism: A Breakthrough in the Foreknowledge Controversy?" *Religious Studies* 52, no. 3 (2016): 333–344; John M. Hicks, "classic Arminianism and Open Theism: A Substantial Difference in their Theologies of Providence." *Trinity Journal* 33, no. 1 (2012): 3–18. I will not address the middle position in relation to salvation as discussed by Gordon C. Olson *Beyond Calvinism & Arminianism: An Inductive, Mediate Theology of Salvation*. Third, expand, revised, & updated. (Lynchburg, VA: Global Gospel Publishers, 2012), 170.

<sup>50</sup> DeSilva classifies the "apostasy" perhaps as the "unpardonable sin" and thus the need for the author of Hebrews of a warning to the audience of the Hebrews and the *Caution* of the believers. This is as cited by Christopher Wade Cowan "Confident of Better Things": Assurance of Salvation in the Letter to the Hebrews." (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2012), 9; J.B. Rowell as cited by Lars Kierspel and Theological Research Exchange Network. "The Meaning of the Warning Passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews." (2000), 14; who shares the same view as Donald Guthrie. *New Testament Theology*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 608–9, arguing for a person that has reached a state of obduracy that can never be forgiven; As you can see, there is no "eternal security" by neither of these scholars or their progeny which appears to be contradictory to what the rest of the canon is teaching.

Because of the apparent warnings of the letter in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the doctrine of eternal security must have been far from the author's mind—unlike contemporary debates. The current theological topics, such as losing salvation and eternal security, were absent from the author's mind.<sup>51</sup> Indeed if the author were genuinely a Hellenistic Jew, then he likely would not have thought in terms of medieval existentialist philosophical categories. He likely thought in terms of Hebraic function categories—that is, using fiery rhetoric to persevere or discipline his Hebrew saints.

Structurally, DeSilva seems to be right on point, yet he still uses words not found in the Epistle. Scholars with similar positions would be William L. Lane and Craig R. Koester.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, Scot McKnight sought to provide clarification with a synthetic approach.<sup>53</sup> He organized the warning passages as a chiasmus of sorts.<sup>54</sup> This synthetic approach shows a propensity of elements or components that McKnight has described as 1) the subjects or audience, 2) the sin that leads to, 3) the warning, and 4) the consequence of that sin if the warning is not followed.<sup>55</sup> While the elements attempt to provide a hermeneutical approach, the expositional findings stem from theological presuppositions.

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<sup>51</sup> David Arthur DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000), 240–45.

<sup>52</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 267; Craig R. Koester “God’s Purposes and Christ’s Saving Work according to Hebrews,” in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives in Soteriology*, ed. J. G. van der Watt (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 392.

<sup>53</sup> The synthetic approach, according to McKnight, provides “clarity on the meaning of each component in a single passage.” More specifically, a synthetic approach would yield the nature of sin that are being described and the subjects being addressed in relation to the warning passage. He uses this approach as kind of “comparative” evidence, which gives a more complete picture of the original author’s intent. In other words, all warning passages must be understood collectively, rather than individually, to properly address them.

<sup>54</sup> Although there is no agreement that the author of Hebrews used these “warning passages” as warnings against losing salvation but as exhortations, these elements or components will be used as described by: McKnight, *The Warning Passages of Hebrews*, 25; and assimilating them with the rhetorical nature of these exhortation as presented by Walter Ray Nutt and Global University. Graduate School of Theology. “Crucifying the Lord Again? Greek Exegesis of Hebrews 5:11–6: 12,” (Global University, 2015), 17. These two scholars are used to support the fact that exhortation was used in a rhetorical sense of the word in the book of Hebrews. McKnight has been cited by multiple scholars including Nutt, “Crucifying the Lord Again? 2015; Michael Osladil and Theological Research Exchange Network. “Warning Passages of Hebrews and Historical Background,” 2000; and most scholars have agreed with him in relation to the warning passage presented in a chiasm form, not in a rhetorical exhortatory form which will be argued herein. This chiasm was not in any way contingent upon the soteriology of the audience (as the author of Hebrews does rhetorically specifies) but rather on the apostasy therefrom, which appears to be contradictory to the salvation obtained once and for all in Christ Jesus.

<sup>55</sup> McKnight, “The Warning Passages of Hebrews,” 24–31. In his article, McKnight successfully demonstrates that the author’s language is overwhelming hortatory, and in fact is one of the only NT books to use

This discussion of new terms and more precise definitions circles back and shows the problem in its setting. The phrase warning passages is a weak expression at best and a misleading label at worst because it creates a never-ending cycle. While the attempt is to focus on the text, there is a danger of moving away from expositional inquiry into theological posturing by presuppositions, especially when words do not appear in the original language.

### **The Problem**

Having overviewed the current state of scholarship, the problem is not a lack of writing. The problem is not a shortage of theological models because, as previously seen, there are paradigms for terms and structures. The problem is an expositional need to move on to the next logical step. This judgment arises because the views or positions mentioned above have created two poles on the same spectrum or two schools of thought—the dichotomy—and there seems to be no room outside that label. If these passages are warning passages, then the possibilities are endless for theological posturing regarding the destination of believers unless the author never intended these pericopes to be warnings at all.<sup>56</sup> This dichotomy creates the opportunity for hermeneutical gymnastics to take place to support one position or another. Inevitably, the proper

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the Greek word “persevere” as a hortatory injunction on the believer, but he does not attribute any dissuasion to an exhortation which are hortatory, but rather to warnings.

<sup>56</sup> The term theological is best described as a biblical discipline of theology which emphasizes the progressive nature of biblical revelation. For the most part, Johann Philipp Gables has been named the father of biblical theology with his inaugural lecture “An Oration on the Proper Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology,” at the University of Altdorf, March 30, 1787, where he explained the specific objectives of each—defining biblical theology as an inductive, historical, and descriptive discipline, in contrast to systematic theology, which according to him are deductive, ahistorical, and normative disciplines. For the subject of other theologies see Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000). For the nature of systematic theology and its relation to biblical theology, see Gaffin, “Systematic and Biblical Theology,” 281–99; cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology,” *TJ* 5, no.2 (1984): 113–27. For the current discussion of systematic theology, see John Webster, “Principle of Systematic Theology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no.1 (2009):56–71; Webster, “Systematic Theology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1–18.

exposition will lead to some theological conclusions; however, these conclusions should not presuppose any problems concerning the destination of a believer. They should emphasize the direction of a believer with the words used in the Epistle, an idea that the author of Hebrews was addressing to both cultures simultaneously.<sup>57</sup> Following this logic, a believer must avoid sin (direction) while living a Christian life. The same believer must avoid evildoers (direction) while living in this world, and the same believer must be able to overcome the suffering that comes with following (direction) Christ, including any attempts by the enemy to have a believer apostatize or change the direction. The author knew that this direction was a first-century reality that must be in the mind of the expositor as the exposition takes place.

### **Proposed Solution to the Problem**

The book of Hebrews blends two distinct cultures, Hebrew and Greek, which blended during the *diaspora*.<sup>58</sup> The solution to the problem found in today's scholarship would be to interpret the passages considering the Classical Greek rhetoric used for sermons while acknowledging a New Christian Position (NCP) approach blending the duality of cultures and contrast.<sup>59</sup> In other words, a "Socio-Linguistical" path between the two sides would embrace non-contradiction.<sup>60</sup> On the Hebrew side, it is uncontested that the author uses OT references quite

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<sup>57</sup> DeSilva, *Hebrews 6: 4–8: A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation*, 230–35.

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Jacobs, "Rabbi Joseph Kara as an Exegete of Biblical Narrative: Discovering the Phenomenon of Exposition." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2012): 73–89.

<sup>59</sup> The New Christian Position, or NCP is terminology used before as the New Covenant Theology but never used with the same terminology as used in this research. The terminology arises from the nuance that the author gives in his rhetorical stance and the fact that this community of faith is now together in Christ for both cultures. Although scholars agree that there are rhetorical factors within the book of Hebrews, not all scholars have agreed that the rhetorical arguments presented are in the deliberative form but rather, by implication in either the epideictic or forensic form.

<sup>60</sup> The basic premise of the law of non-contradiction is that no contradiction can be true, and this has been a seemingly unassailable dogma since the work of Aristotle, especially for rhetoricians, see J. C Priest, Graham, Beall, Bradley P. Armour-Garb, and Inc Net Library. *The Law of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays* (New

substantially, as synagogue homily rhetoric, in the uncompromised form of Jewish rhetoric. On the Greek side, it is uncontroverted that the author uses a classical rhetorical style, unlike any other biblical author. An interpretation must cover and consider both sides.

### **The Thesis and Method**

When there is an exposition using Hebrew and Greek rhetoric as the author used it in the book of Hebrews, the reader can understand the book's message in its proper context as an appeal rather than a warning to a community of faith. In other words, the pericopes in Hebrews do not present epideictic or forensic arguments; they offer deliberative rhetoric to convey a particular message. *The Warning Passages in Hebrews: Exhortations Written Using Deliberative Rhetoric to a Community of Faith* attempts to add to the conversation regarding the proper rhetorical interpretation of these elusive warning expressions using a hybrid hermeneutical method.

This research will highlight the NCP using the author's deliberative rhetoric to persuade the community to make a policy decision of direction. This Community of Faith is not the OT Covenantal Community but is the new way God communicates with His people (Hebrews 1:1–2). Further confidence in the covenant promises (Hebrews 6:9–20), new laws written in hearts (Hebrews 8:10, 10:16), and new perfection of believers (Hebrews 10:14) all indicate an emergence of better things.<sup>61</sup>

This research will develop a hybrid hermeneutic using classical, contemporary Greek,

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York; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2004), 76. The Law of Non-Contradiction states that two diametrically opposed truth propositions cannot both be true in the same sense. If a truth proposition is true, then its opposite is false.

<sup>61</sup> With the usage of better things by the author of Hebrews, we can see the corollary congruent with the studies of Louis Berkhof, *The Assurance of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Smitten, 1928); M. Knoll, “John Wesley and the Doctrine of Assurance,” *BSac* 132 (1975): 161–77; John F. Walvoord, “The Doctrine of Assurance in Contemporary Theology,” *BSac* 116 (1959): 195–204. The fact that it is God who brought about this result, see An Excursus on “The God Who Speaks” is covered by Albert Mohler Jr, *Christ Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2017), 8–9.

and Jewish rhetoric.<sup>62</sup> The author of Hebrews used eloquence and efficacy in his writings. He did so to reveal a new covenantal position to the people of God; thus, the usage of classical Greek deliberative rhetoric and the NCP must be combined. As a result, a unique "Socio-Linguistical" background emerges.<sup>63</sup>

The primary method employed in this research is an exposition that considers both classical Greek and Jewish rhetoric simultaneously applied to the texts. By decategorizing the warning passages and espousing other discourses found within the Epistle, the actual genre of rhetoric used by the author will emerge with the socio-linguistical approach. Each warning passage analyzed under the three types of the rhetoric of the times will determine the correct kind

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<sup>62</sup> For a review of the difference in classical rhetoric see, Richard Leo Enos, "Speaking of Cicero and His Mother: A Research Note on an Ancient Greek Inscription and the Study of Classical Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Review* 24, no. 4 (2005): 457–465; Charles Marsh, "Antecedents of Two-Way Symmetry in Classical Greek Rhetoric: The Rhetoric of Isocrates," *Public Relations Review* 29, no. 3 (2003): 351–367; Clarke Rountree, "The (almost) Blameless Genre of Classical Greek Epideictic," *Rhetorica* 19, no. 3 (2001): 293–305; Richard Leo Enos, "Landmark Essays on Classical Greek Rhetoric," Edward Schiappa, ed. *Rhetoric Review* 13, no. 2 (1995): 443; Robin Waterfield, *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, ed. Erik Gunderson, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 355; David M Timmerman and Edward Schiappa, "Classical Greek Rhetorical Theory and the Disciplining of Discourse," *Heythrop Journal* 57, no. 1 (2016): 152–153; Robert Prus, "Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pragmatism: A Missing Link between Classical Greek Scholarship and the Interactionist Study of Human Knowing and Acting," *Qualitative Sociology Review: QSR* 13, no. 2 (2017): 6–58; Fredal, James. *The Enthymeme: Syllogism, Reasoning, and Narrative in Ancient Greek Rhetoric*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020); *The Classical Review* 72, no. 1 (2022): 79–81; Fabian Sieber, "Libanius's Progymnasmata. Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric." *The Classical Review* 62, no. 1 (2012): 126.

<sup>63</sup> The people of God were aware of the time that a covenant would last and whether the covenant was contingent based on bilateral participation or unilateral by the participation of the patron, Jessy Dressin, "A 'Forever' Covenant," *Baltimore Jewish Times* 364, no. 1 (2018): 58–58; Nixon de Vera, "The God of the Covenant: Karl Barth on Creation Care," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 12, no. 5 (2021): 326; Sunwoo Hwang, "Coexistence of Unconditionality and Conditionality of the Davidic Covenant in Chronicles," *Heythrop Journal* 58, no. 2 (2017): 239–246; Adam Gregerman, "Is the Biblical Land Promise Irrevocable? Post-Nostra Aetate Catholic Theologies of the Jewish Covenant and the Land of Israel," *Modern Theology* 34, no. 2 (2018): 137–158; Hayyim Angel, "The Eternal Davidic Covenant in II Samuel Chapter 7 and its Later Manifestations in the Bible," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2016): 83. For further discussions on covenant theology, see Hugo Méndez, "He Spoke.Forever": A Hebrew Idiom in Luke 1:55." *Biblica* 98, no. 2 (2017): 257 – 269; Ryan D. Harker, "Intertextuality, Apocalypticism, and Covenant: The Rhetorical Force of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:9–22:5," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 38, no. 1 (2016): 45–73; Thomas R. Blanton, "Spirit and Covenant Renewal: A Theologoumenon of Paul's Opponents in 2 Corinthians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 1 (2010): 129–151.

of rhetoric employed by the author so that the apparent usage of classical Greek with the philosophy of the time will become evident.<sup>64</sup>

This "socio-linguistical" approach will be applied to the text to show how the author of Hebrews gave them deliberative dissuasion, or the philosophy of the times, with his usage of the OT while using Jewish rhetoric. This research will analyze the hidden meaning of the historical OT used by the author of Hebrews. It will also compare other scholarship to see any nuance of interpretation, like "theistically motivated historiography."<sup>65</sup> While not commonplace, the approach is not out of place in the field and, again, will yield the proper intent of the author.

The scope of hermeneutics is simple to state but not so simple to accomplish; however, it aims to discover the original author's divine and human intentions.<sup>66</sup> With this purpose in mind, the author of Hebrews used a lot of inter-biblical connections in his writings.<sup>67</sup> Scholars have

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<sup>64</sup> Although there is a small distinction between the first century philosophy employed and other classical Greek philosophy, mainly the fact that the post-Socratic philosophers established four schools of philosophy: Cynicism, Skepticism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism, does not appear to affect the method utilized by the author of Hebrews, see John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray, *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World* (New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), 277–305.

<sup>65</sup> This is an important aspect of exposition because it keeps a balance between the two spectrums of what the author of Hebrews was attempting to convey to his readers—the history of the Jewish people with the in scripted word, and the new covenant in Christ with the inspired word. See Ari Mermelstein, "When History Repeats itself: The Theological Significance of the Abrahamic Covenant in Early Jewish Writings," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 27, no. 2 (2017): 113–142; Christian Grappe, "Roland Deines, *Acts of God in History: Studies Towards Recovering a Theological Historiography* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament, 317), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2013," *Revue d'Histoire Et De Philosophie Religieuses* (2014); Roland Deines, *Acts of God in History: Studies Towards Recovering a Theological Historiography*, eds. Christoph Ochs and Peter Watts (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 7. In his book, Deines laments the fact that new currents in theological studies are "seeking to engage in theological interpretation without recourse to *historical* interpretation" and this should be viewed as an alarming trend according to him. This is what I believe happened with the *Anti-Eternal Security* camp when interpreting the warning passages without using the historical data as such; rather, they interpret it in a theological way without given a proper way to the historiographical approach, which creates a penumbra in their interpretation and the possibility of a person applying synergism in relation to their salvation. An unbalanced interpretation appears when interpreting scriptures lacks a systematic approach, simply to support a deeply rooted presupposition.

<sup>66</sup> For the original intention of the authors, hermeneutics will be used as described by Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006); cf. Fish E. Stanley, "Interpreting the Variorum," In *Reader-Response Criticism*. ed. Jane P. Thompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 164–84.

<sup>67</sup> These approaches are exegetical in the sense of using the original intent of the author of Hebrews as described by Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews*, 2019 and Tremper Longman and David E. Garland. *The*

used different hermeneutical approaches to understand their significance during their exegetical analysis.<sup>68</sup> These hermeneutical approaches are essential for interpretation. But at times, variations may appear incomplete, and a new approach is needed to fill in any gaps in understanding. This incompleteness is why a hybrid methodology must be employed to correctly interpret the Book of Hebrews.

Scholars have also utilized other hermeneutical tools to minimize the presuppositions found in research.<sup>69</sup> However, scholars may have overlooked some factors in the Book of Hebrews. Proper hermeneutics yield the correct elements. The rhetorical type employed in the Epistle—epideictic, forensic, or deliberative—is one such factor. With this understanding, a socio-linguistical approach is based on solid hermeneutical principles and is appropriate for a

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*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Revised ed. vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). These approaches are literary analysis in the sense covered by G.K. Beale where he identifies the literary elements when interpreting OT passages by the NT writers. A further description will be given on his approach as part of this methodology.

<sup>68</sup> An exegetical analysis is based on the contemporary interpretation of the ancient writings, structural in the sense of syntactical composition by the original author and linguistic in the same fashion, all viewed simultaneously. See Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews*; Dana M Harris, Andreas J. Köstenberger, and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2019); James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 40 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924); Harold W. Attridge and Helmut Koester, *Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1989); Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Carlisle, England; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993); Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, U.K.; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012); Thomas Schreiner, *Hebrews: Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020); Richard A. Fuhr Jr and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Academic, 2016), 39; David R Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011); Raymond J McCall, *Basic Logic; the Fundamental Principles of Formal Deductive Reasoning*, 2nd ed. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952); Daniel L Akin, David Lewis Allen, and Ned Lee Mathews, *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010); Scott C. Powers and Theological Research Exchange Network, "An Analysis of the Warning Passages of Hebrews with a View to the Development of Text-Driven Sermons" (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 1. In the OT and the NT, we see how God revealed His will through prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, which can be called revelatory preaching. They also did what is called explanatory preaching, which was already revealed to them by inspiration; this is the focus of text-driven approach. See Akin, *Text-Driven Preaching*, 38.

<sup>69</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017); Grant R Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Andreas J Köstenberger and Richard Duane Patterson, *For the Love of God's Word: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, abridged and revised (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2015).

research project to show the direction the author was taking his audience. This hybrid approach proposed in this research is unique enough to warrant the effort and is not so novel that scholars should dismiss it. Although the book of Hebrews is not Classical Greek in the strictest sense, it is nevertheless a hybrid of koine Greek and certain classical features such as classical rhetoric and hortatory rhetoric, which are winding sentences mimicking the style of classical Greek not found in koine Greek.

### **Assumptions and Theoretical Scope**

Certain assumptions must limit the scope of this research. These assumptions and theoretical scope will be listed sequentially. First, the only aim of using the socio-linguistical method is to remove speculation from the common interpretation of the passages and guide the research, not in a higher-criticism manner but in a hermeneutical-expositional way.<sup>70</sup>

Introductory issues of the book of Hebrews would be outside of the problem of this study. This dissertation will not develop topics such as authorship, who the audience was, or the dates when the author wrote the Epistle. These are some of the introductory issues that other studies possess.

Second, a highly rhetorical stance from the author's use of classical Greek must emerge to expose the passages properly; otherwise, the original message will disappear without ascertaining the proper rhetorical genre employed throughout the Epistle.<sup>71</sup> Some have attributed the wrong lofty meaning using epideictic rhetoric instead of deliberative.<sup>72</sup> The wrong rhetoric

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<sup>70</sup> There is skepticism and incredulity when it comes to the schools of higher-criticism in relation to the historicity of the biblical books embodied in the new programs of religions in schools, see, Michael Lee, "Higher Criticism and Higher Education at the University of Chicago: William Rainey Harper's Vision of Religion in the Research University," *History of Education Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2008): 508–533.

<sup>71</sup> S. M. Baugh, "Greek Periods in the Book of Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 60, no. 1 (2018): 24–44.

<sup>72</sup> Because there are too many scholars to mentioned, the most prolific ones will be discussed in chapter two of the dissertation. Also, the different meanings of rhetorical genres (epideictic, Forensic, deliberative) will be discussed in the next chapter.

yields an incorrect application to the passages in contemporary interpretations because what appeared to be an appeal has now become a warning. Similarly, the author of Hebrews must have used the same rhetorical tools utilized by his contemporaries during the time of the writing of the Epistle. The researcher will discuss this nuance further in the next chapter.

Third, the overutilization of the OT throughout the Epistle must be differentiated to have the same application for many audiences, not only the original audience but subsequent ones. In other words, the author of Hebrews was not recapitulating the same covenants of blessings and curses to be applicable in the same manner. Instead, the author used them to guide them through a historical journey to convey a new and improved message to the people receiving it. His approach was futuristic, so the statement could apply to Jews and Gentiles. Both cultures needed to be addressed with their respective audiences with both ethical and practical applications to aid them in their direction.

### **Organization of Research**

Chapter one will go straight into introducing the topic and outlining the current situation around the pericopes of the warning passages while presenting a thesis and proposing a plan of study for the future. This research plan would not cover the traditional introductory issues encompassing the scholarship of the Book of Hebrews. Instead, this chapter emphasizes and proposes a hybrid solution that fits the text in the contemporary milieu, using reliable hermeneutical methods. The research will show that the author was in the middle of two cultures. As a result, the author chose to use classical Greek rather than Koine Greek as other biblical authors did during the same time because it was the only way possible to address them both with the dual rhetorical stance. The duality of cultures and the need to address both Jewish and Greek

needs, could only be accomplished by using deliberative classical rhetoric and Jewish rhetoric. This makes the book of Hebrews rather interesting.

Chapter 2 starts by defining rhetoric in Hellenistic times. It then illustrates the use of rhetoric in selected OT and NT books. Finally, classical rhetoric in the Book of Hebrews is covered.<sup>73</sup> Chapter three describes the New Christian Position that must emerge before the exposition. New things have led to a Christian understanding of the community's position because of Jesus. In chapter four, there will be an extensive exposition of the seven traditional warnings and three additional passages in scripture undergirding the use of the OT in the original context in the book of Hebrews. An outline of the book of Hebrews would show how the author (using classical Greek) revealed a new position for those in Christ, mainly a better one, paying close attention to the choice of vocabulary usage and the genre of the Epistle, which shows an undeniable rhetorical oration to it.

Chapter five will give findings that show Christ's superiority within the pinnacle of His works and other aspects of the lives of those in the family of faith. Interpreting the exhortation passages with two cultures in mind will circle back to the problems presented with prior interpretations by other scholars. There are distinct findings in the book of Hebrews where the author was excellent when it came to the better things found in Christ, and this was his way of encouraging them and persuading them to understand this new direction.

Chapter six will conclude the dissertation by showing the absence of warning passages *per se* as the vocabulary used by the original author because of the New Christian Position in Christ. This community is, in modern times, the New Christian Position. Since the word "warned" appears only rhetorically, it would be illogical to conclude that the author was warning

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<sup>73</sup> Goldin, *Greek Rhetoricians and The Enthymeme*, 56.

anyone in the future but using dissuasion to accomplish the purpose of the message. A discussion in the areas of Hellenism, Judaism, the first-century audience, and the subsequent audience would be an attempt to corroborate what this research has been all about.<sup>74</sup> The contributions of this research and recommendations for further research will culminate in this dissertational research.

After the conclusion, an appendix area will expand on the views of other scholars regarding the warning passages. These scholars have contributed to the theological posturing in which academia finds itself today, not to agree or disagree with them but rather so that further investigation can be done insofar as this new socio-linguistical approach.

### Summary

This chapter started with the idea that the warning passages as an expression come more from commentators than the text. An examination of the term's genesis and the prior understanding of the Book of Hebrews during the different eras occurred. The chapter also reviewed the current state of the scholarship. The researcher surveyed the most famous views to understand where scholarship is today, showing a resulting dichotomy. The chapter explained the contradiction and the reaction of recent scholarship.

The chapter discussed the problem found within recent scholarship and presented a proposed solution to the problem. The researcher submitted the thesis and the purpose of the study. The scope and method described fit the current hermeneutical landscape.<sup>75</sup> Finally, the

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<sup>74</sup> Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "50 Years of Modelling Second Temple Judaism: Whence and Wither?" *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 2019; 50, no. 4–5 (2019): 604–629.

<sup>75</sup> As it relates to hermeneutics, although most methods are aimed to get theological insight, the approached herein is intended to obtain a better expositional understanding as it relates to the application of the methodology to the text, see Meg H. Madson, "Hermeneutics and Theological Method," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23, no. 3 (1986): 529.

research's organization summary walked the reader through the dissertation. The researcher showed the project to be both a worthy and feasible study. Now, the investigation moves to the explanation of rhetoric.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC

Understanding how authors used classical rhetoric during the Hellenistic Period is essential for this research. First, rhetoric is a linguistic tool used in the art of persuasion. Second, authors used rhetoric in biblical accounts (Prophets, Psalms, Paul) and extra-biblical accounts (Aristotle, Philo, Eusebius). Here is where this research found classical rhetoric to have flourished. Third, classical rhetoric is different than standard rhetoric because it focuses on the proficiency of both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. As a result, it appears to be more eloquent in its delivery.<sup>76</sup> This chapter will review rhetoric in Hellenistic times, rhetoric in the OT, rhetoric the NT, and rhetoric in the Book of Hebrews.

### Review of the Use of Rhetoric in Hellenistic Times

The Hellenized Jews of the first century were familiar with Greco-Roman culture. They spoke to the people in their language and style as their culture highly educated them in Greek literature and Jewish rhetoric.<sup>77</sup> In addition, rhetoricians of the time were familiar with the rhetorical usage of hyperbaton.<sup>78</sup> However, perhaps not used as occasional rhetorical devices like antithesis, hendiadys, or even anaphora.<sup>79</sup> According to Aristotle, "many written discourses, such

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<sup>76</sup> A superb source of ancient sources of rhetoric covering this era can be reviewed by checking Dean R. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, Biblical Exegesis and Theology 18, revised edition (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishing, 1990), 35.

<sup>77</sup> A logical conclusion can be drawn that the author of Hebrews must be viewed as one that was familiar with both classical Greek rhetoric as well as Jewish rhetoric, see Richard Hidary, *Rabbis and Classical Rhetoric: Sophistic Education and Oratory in the Talmud and Midrash* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15; Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962), 100–2; H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 255–64.

<sup>78</sup> Greek literary authors used hyperbaton to indicate the boundaries of their basic informational units, much like a period or a colon. More on the use of the hyperbaton later in the chapter.

<sup>79</sup> For an analysis and explanation of the hyperbaton, see S. M. Baugh, *Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews*, 195; Hebert Weir Smyth, *A Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1916), 3029; Andrew M. Divine and Lawrence D. Stephens, *Discontinuous Syntax: Hyperbaton in Greek* (New York: Oxford, 2000), 208; Daniel Markovic, "Hyperbaton in Greek Literary Sentence," *GRBS* 46 (2006) 127–146. Other rhetorical devices may have been known to rhetoricians in the form of the antithesis or the contrast or opposite between two things; the

as epistles, combined features" of all three types of rhetoric used by rhetoricians throughout the times, specifically during the Hellenistic Period.<sup>80</sup>

### **Genres of Rhetoric: ἐπιδεικτικόν, δικανικόν, συμβουλευτικόν**

During the Hellenistic Period, rhetoricians used three genres of Greek rhetoric.<sup>81</sup> First, ἐπιδεικτικόν (*epideiktikon*). This type was either demonstrative or epideictic. Rhetoricians used this form of rhetoric to express either praise or blame. Second, δικανικόν (*dikanikon*). This type was either judicial or forensic. Rhetoricians used this form to describe either an accusation or a defense. Finally, συμβουλευτικόν (*sumbouleutikon*). This type was deliberative. Rhetoricians used the deliberative form to express either exhortation or dissuasion.

Rhetoricians used Greek rhetoric for persuasive speaking and arguments, and the book of Hebrews is no exception. Coincidentally, multiple classical rhetoricians used the same type of rhetoric within their writings.<sup>82</sup> As a result, the same type of rhetoric used during the Hellenistic Period, and for what purposes, is easily seen with other contemporary authors that used rhetoric outside of the biblical narratives and outside other biblical authors. Rhetoric was very prolific in antiquity and a tool used by many writers of both side of the coin. Comparing literary examples from other writings in the classical Greek arena (Plato, Aristotle, Aeschylus, Alexander) shows some similarities. These similarities used by other extra-biblical authors applied the same

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hendiadys or the expression of a single idea by two connected words; and the anaphora or the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses.

<sup>80</sup> Campbell, *The Philosophy or Rhetoric*, 1776.

<sup>81</sup> George H. Kennedy talks about the evolution of rhetoric in the Hellenistic period, specifically when he cites other scholars (cf. Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period*, 44).

<sup>82</sup> Several rhetoricians would contemporaneously use the same type of rhetoric albeit used in extrabiblical writings, see Epictetus *Encheiridion*, LCL 218, p. 528–29; Plutarch *Moralia* Advise about Keeping Well, LCL 222, p. 260–61; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Ancient Orators 1. Lysias*, LCL 465, p. 52–3; Menander Rhetor *Treatise 1*, LCL 539, p. 48–9; Cicero *Orator*, LCL 342, p. 332–33; Aristotle *Rhetoric to Alexander*, LCL 317, p. 468–69; Fronto, Marcus Cornelius *Correspondence*, LCL 112, p. 104–05.

semantic range and with the exact rhetorical utilization within the Hellenistic Period between 330 BC and AD 400.

Interestingly, each kind or εἶδος (*eidos*) of rhetoric during the classical Greek rhetoric times comprised three elements: the speaker, the subject, and the audience.<sup>83</sup> The speaker was the rhetorician. The matter could be of many kinds (of which the rhetorician would use different types of persuasion to convey), and the audience was inevitably either a spectator or a judge. A spectator was concerned with capacity. A judge was concerned with judging things of the past or the future.<sup>84</sup> During the Hellenistic classical rhetorical times, the assembly members (or the adult male citizens that had ultimate decision power over the city) were either a judge concerning things of the future or a juror relating to things of the past. Only the deliberative type of rhetoric would have allowed the audience to be the judge, not necessarily in a forensic way, but in a dissuasive or exhortatory way to determine better things in the future. In other words, the audience was concerned with capacity—or direction—as the spectators.

Even more interesting is the finding that there were times when each speaker used different types of rhetoric. For example, the epideictic speaker spoke to audiences that belonged to the present time, and thus the speaker would bring praise or blame to achieve his goal. A forensic speaker would talk to an audience that belonged to the past, whose actions were to accuse or defend. A deliberative speaker would speak to the audience that belonged to the future because exhortation or dissuasion was always in the future sense. Rhetoricians of the time would say that the epideictic speaker had the most control regarding the content of the speech and the reactions of the audience that received the address.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1358<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1358<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 182.

## Aristotle on Rhetoric

According to Aristotle, epideictic rhetoric includes any discourse. Whether orally or in writing, that does not aim at a specific action or decision but seeks to enhance: the understanding, knowledge, or beliefs of the persons, things, or values spoken.<sup>86</sup> Forensic rhetoric or judicial was more useful to more people since Greek law required those in law courts to speak on their behalf.<sup>87</sup> According to Aristotle, because of the emotional appeal, it was a more generalized form of rhetoric.<sup>88</sup> Rhetoricians of classical background would use this type of rhetoric in their writings.<sup>89</sup> The third type of rhetoric, deliberative, was primarily used for politics because it was concerned with persuading the audience to accept a policy decision. This type of rhetoric uses the practical approach, which brings the best for most people. Other rhetoricians used this style of rhetoric, as contemporaries of classical Greek indeed used it.<sup>90</sup> This research must resolve the tension of the type of rhetoric utilized to achieve a consensus and move away from jargon.

## Review of the Use of Rhetoric in The Old Testament

Understanding biblical authors' literary and rhetorical features is imperative to obtain a more informed reading of biblical scriptures. The proper hermeneutical methods for biblical interpretation must exist. If so, a person can ascertain the actual message and significance, but a

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<sup>86</sup> Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 47–57.

<sup>87</sup> Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period*, 46.

<sup>88</sup> G. Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, ed. L.F. Bitzer (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), 22–29.

<sup>89</sup> Antiphon *Testimonia*, Part 3: *Reception (R)*, LCL 532, 102–03; Lucian *The Dream, or Lucian's Career*, LCL 130, 230–31; Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers 5.1 Aristotle*, LCL 184, 452–53; Dio Chrysostom *Testimonia*, LCL 385, 388–89; Plutarch *Lives. Cicero*, LCL 99, 94–5; Plato *Sophist*, LCL 123, 296–97.

<sup>90</sup> Menander Rhetor *Treatise 2*, LCL 539, 212–13; Dio Chrysostom *Testimonia*, LCL 385, 388–89; Sextus Empiricus *Against the Professors*, LCL 382, 230–31; Plutarch *Moralia. Table-Talk*, LCL 425, 272–73.

person cannot do this unless proper exposition emerges.<sup>91</sup> This section of the review will use both broad examples of as well as specific cases.

### **Different Usage of Rhetoric in the Old Testament**

Many authors of the OT were masters in rhetoric. For example, the prophets in the OT would, time and again, use rhetoric to convey powerful truths about God and their positions in creation. There is a purpose in the linguistic tools when examining why biblical authors would use such things.<sup>92</sup> For example, the prophet Amos used irony in rhetoric to convey the most powerful messages. The rhetoric of Amos includes a beautiful mixture of humor and threat, sarcasm and irony, hyperbole and prediction, and it appears that Saul used the rhetoric of convention as his foundational narratives emerged.<sup>93</sup> The use of rhetoric was prolific in the OT, and here are more examples.

The author of Job was a master in rhetoric, but he used his body to express it, and it appears that Ruth also used rhetoric.<sup>94</sup> In some chronicles, the phenomenon in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, whereby the practice of law seems like a conflation of two earlier iterations of the law, is found in the legal corpora of the Pentateuch. Here, a great perplexity in the legal blend

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<sup>91</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 217.

<sup>92</sup> In using rhetoric, the biblical authors were attempting to convey something new in the language called theology, see Arthur J Keefer, "Theology in Language, Rhetoric, and Beyond: Essays in Old and New Testament, Jack R. Lundbom, James Clarke, 2014 xv + 203 pp," *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 23, no. 3 (2016): 340–341.

<sup>93</sup> William Domeris, "Shades of Irony in the Anti-Language of Amos," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Mark Leuchter, "The Rhetoric of Convention: The Foundational Saul Narratives (1 Samuel 9–11) Reconsidered," *Journal of Religious History* 40, no. 1 (2016): 3–19.

<sup>94</sup> Amy Erickson, "'Without My Flesh I Will See God:' Job's Rhetoric of the Body," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 2 (2013): 295–313; Michael V. Fox, "The Meanings of the Book of Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 1 (2018): 7–18; Jeremy Schipper, "The Syntax and Rhetoric of Ruth 1:9a," *Vetus Testamentum* 62, no. 4 (2012): 642–645.

employed toward "haggadic" or rhetorical ends can emerge, whereby the law deviates from its original focus and come out within a new configuration of meaning.<sup>95</sup>

The book of Proverbs can appear to have rhetorical flavor when the ten lectures emerge from a father to a son, who seems to mimic how the author of Hebrews was writing. The rhetorical nature called the son to attention and called him to remember and obey, and finally, there were some exhortations against the strange women.<sup>96</sup> Almost every book in the OT has some type of rhetoric employed by the biblical author to elicit a response or convey a message more assertively. The main goal of Jewish rhetoric was and is to bring the ethics of the times front and center as they related to God and their covenantal relationship with Him.

According to some scholars, rhetoric is the art of composition by which languages are made more descriptive, interpretative, or persuasive.<sup>97</sup> Although the concept hails from ancient Greco-Roman cultures, in the Ancient Near East (ANE), thousands of years earlier, people knew biblical prophets used this device even before it appeared.<sup>98</sup> Prophetic literature was employed repeatedly to convey the stories of God, His acts, power, and grace, as these stories reminded the people of the antiquity of God's covenant with Israel.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Because the use of rhetoric was so prolific in the OT, it would be easier to discover which books did not use it. We find rhetoric even in some of the Chronicles told in the OT, see Joshua Berman, "The Legal Blend in Biblical Narrative (Joshua 20:1–9, Judges 6:25–31, 1 Samuel 15:2, 28:3–25, 2 Kings 4:1–7, Jeremiah 34:12–17, Nehemiah 5:1–12)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 1 (2015): 105–125.

<sup>96</sup> Glenn D Pemberton, "The Rhetoric of the Father in Proverbs 1-9," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30, no. 1 (2005): 63–82.

<sup>97</sup> David N. Freedman and Gary A. Herion, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. 3 (New Heaven LD: Bantam Doubleday Publishing, 2008), 129.

<sup>98</sup> Lundborn, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 165.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 23.

## Features Found in Jeremiah

Prophecy is a predominant feature in the book of Jeremiah. In analyzing prophetic literature, one must understand that prophecies should emerge in three primary and distinct types: first, according to their literary style; second, according to their genre; and third, according to their time of fulfillment. To interpret prophetic literature correctly and consistently, the reader of biblical prophecies must remember these types to avoid errors in interpreting the message. The literary style of prophecies can appear between narrative vs. poetry. The genre seems subdivided between curses vs. blessings, and time stops at the time of their fulfillment.<sup>100</sup>

In the selected passage, God spoke to Jeremiah to confirm his call (Jer 1:5) as a prophet to the nations by showing him an almond tree (cf. 1:11), which was important since God was watching over His words to be "fulfilled" soon.<sup>101</sup> These types of prophecies were typical in ANE texts; however, these prophecies did not measure the magnitude of biblical prophecy in which YHWH was involved.<sup>102</sup> A distinctive feature of biblical prophecy is found in the polemic that God, the monotheistic God, was speaking to Jeremiah, and His words would come true.<sup>103</sup>

Some scholars have postulated that the book of Jeremiah has multiple rhetorical devices utilized by the biblical author and that the prophet possessing the most extraordinary rhetorical skills was unquestionably Jeremiah.<sup>104</sup> To this point, a reader can see Jeremiah's poetry as "accumulatio," particularly Jer 1:10, where the author states, "to uproot and to break down, to

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<sup>100</sup> Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 24.

<sup>101</sup> Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 44.

<sup>102</sup> Christopher B Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 79.

<sup>103</sup> John D Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 36.

<sup>104</sup> Lundborn, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 166.

destroy and to overthrow, to build up and to," but this poetic form can only appear in the original language, not so much so in the English translations.

Another rhetorical feature found within the selected passage is paronomasia.

Paronomasia is either a play on multiple meanings of identical or cognate words or else a play on different words close enough in sound to make assonance (near-rhyme) or pun and is called in the wordplay.<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately, again, it can be seen more clearly in the original language, and the words "almond" (*šaqēd*), שִׁקְדָּה and "watching" (*šōqēd*), שֹׁקֵד found in (Jer 1:11–12). Biblical authors powerfully used this poetic feature to convey this prophetic message, which disappeared during interpretation.<sup>106</sup> Biblical authors would utilize the covenant formulary to report their messages, but they would not include themselves as the recipients of the judgments that came from God. OT rhetoric is quite different than the one used by the author's oration.

A close inspection of the original language of the book of Jeremiah will reveal that he was a skillful poet, used literary tools at his disposal, and was well-trained in rhetoric for his days. He was also a great orator.<sup>107</sup> His poetry is well-balanced and appears not to have any other contemporary parallelisms found, as was common in ancient times.<sup>108</sup> He effectively used repetition to convey God's divine message through him. These literary and rhetorical devices are the key to correctly understanding and interpreting the author's meaning behind these prophecies.<sup>109</sup> The expositor must understand these literary devices so that the interpretation can

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<sup>105</sup> Lundborn, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 196.

<sup>106</sup> Jeffrey Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 104.

<sup>107</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6, 691.

<sup>108</sup> Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 81, No. 1, 1962, 54.

<sup>109</sup> James B Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement* (US: Princeton University Press, 2016), 301.

be congruent with the author's intent. There must be a differentiation between the OT prophecies and the NT ones.

### **The Review of the Use of Rhetoric in the New Testament**

Biblically speaking, the NT contains rhetoric in its messages, just as any other book in the OT. Rhetoric was not only part of the extra-biblical world but also part of the biblical one. The NT is indeed a fascinating change from the writings of the OT, yet the biblical authors employed some of the same rhetorical devices.<sup>110</sup> For example, the author of Hebrews uses specific scriptural passages (Deuteronomy 4, 9, 32; Psalm 95, 118; Isaiah 26; Habakkuk 2; Haggai 2), both in his logical reasoning (the appeal to *logos*) and eliciting emphasis in his audience emotions (the appeal to *pathos*), to achieve the goal of persuading his audience to persevere in their faith (the appeal to the *ethos*).<sup>111</sup> Again this section will have a general principle as well as a specific example.

### **Understanding the OT in the NT**

In G.K. Beale's Handbook. Beale presents nine steps when interpreting OT's passage within the NT.<sup>112</sup> These include: 1) identify the Old Testament Reference; 2) Analyze the broad

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<sup>110</sup> But this time, the rhetoric employed was used as a tool of vengeance of sorts against the oppressors of the second temple Judaism, see Judy Diehl, "Empire and Epistles: Anti-Roman Rhetoric in the New Testament Epistles," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10, no. 2 (2012): 217–263; C. Jan Swearingen, "Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament" (*Studies in Rhetoric and Religion* 8), C. Clifton Black and Duane F. Watson, eds. (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008). *Rhetorica* 29, no. 2 (2011): 195–98; Brice Jones, "New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament" *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 3 (2010): 588; James Kinneavy, "Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy: Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy," *Rhetorica* 12, no. 1 (1994): 123–25; Michael W Holmes, and Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and its Allusions to New Testament Literature*, vol. 121 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

<sup>111</sup> Chee-Chiew Lee, "The Rhetoric of Empathy in Hebrews." *Novum Testamentum* 62; 2020; no. 2 (2020): 201–218.

<sup>112</sup> Beale's book provides a short guide to the use of the Old Testament citations and allusions that are covered now in the New Testament, as he gives a methodological approach and sources to aid the understanding of

New Testament context where the reference occurs; 3) Analyze the Old Testament context where the original text occurs; 4) Survey the use of the Old Testament relevant to the appropriation of the Old Testament in the New Testament text; 5) Compare the text and any variants; 6) Analyze the author's textual use of the Old Testament; 7) Analyze the author's interpretative use of the Old Testament; 8) Analyze the author's theological use of the Old Testament; 9) Analyze the author's rhetorical use of the Old Testament text.<sup>113</sup> While Beale does not touch on the rhetorical values in particular, this universal procedure is beneficial for understanding Hebrews.

Other authors have dealt with issues such as finding Christ in the Old Testament.<sup>114</sup> In doing so, five views, much like the four views of the warning passages, have been developed by academia. Goldingay states, "Considering the meaning of a text that a later writer takes up can aid our understanding of the later writer. But there is no presumption that the later writer works with the meaning of the original text." He opines that "the original text becomes the vehicle whereby the later writer makes a new point and uses the text to this end."<sup>115</sup> This problem can occur in the study of Hebrews too where the passage is used to find a parallel that may not have been originally intended. Even so, standardizing practices creates a framework for study and discussion.

These techniques can be used for entire passages, such as the pericopes of this study. This approach can also examine quotations or allusions to the Old Testament in a verse, a phrase, or

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how New Testament writers refer to the Old Testament, see Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 35.

<sup>113</sup> Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 41–54.

<sup>114</sup> John Goldingay, (Contributor) "Counterpoints: Bible and Theology," In *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*. Editors Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2022), 16.

<sup>115</sup> Goldingay, *Bible and Theology*, 16.

just a word.<sup>116</sup> If the topic of the paper was references to Jewish symbolism, more writers could be treated in this area. However, these two are a sufficient gateway to ideas that are directly tied to the passages that will be explicated.

### Usage of Warnings in the New Testament

At least two of the NT writers used the word for warning *νουθετέω* (*noutheteo*) in their writings. These were Luke and Paul, and the word shows in their writing in Acts 20:31; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Colossians 1:28, 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:15) respectively. But warnings relating to the Christian life are plentiful in the NT. They can be seen even in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 10:33, 12:31–32, 24:12; Mark 3:28–30, 8:38, 9:26, 12:8–9, 13:1; Luke 17:22–35) and John's writings. Johannine scholars have argued that "the understanding of the community in which the text originated plays an important role in interpreting the text." In essence, "the life of the community and the sociological influences of the people" must be considered part of the interpretative framework in exposing such documents, which is true in either canon. This community appears time and again as the *ethos*.

One of the most provocative studies on warning passages, while affirming the irrevocable nature of salvation as found in the NT, has been conducted concerning the usage of "warning passages" found in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>117</sup> The author cited Hays in saying that "the daily

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<sup>116</sup> Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold. *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*, 1. Aufl. ed. Vol. 5 (Oakville, CT; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Alan Kam-Yau. Chan, *Melchizedek Passages in the Bible: A Case Study for Inner-Biblical and Inter-Biblical Interpretation* (Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2016).

<sup>117</sup> This author is associated with the Department of Old and New Testament, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa, See, Godwin A. Etukumana, "How does One Interpret the Synoptic Gospels' Warning Passages while Affirming the Irrevocable Nature of Salvation?" *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 74, no. 3 (2018): 1–7.

activities of the people" of the NT were shaped and controlled by their community in the form of communal *ethos*, which was necessary for the people of the second temple period.

This *ethos* was a critical sign (a badge) that conditioned the entire community's identity in Jesus' time. For the people of antiquity, keeping the communal ethos of the members of such a community, without a doubt, produced a collective identity that showcased a specific lifestyle deeply rooted and approved by the community.<sup>118</sup> Not just the Jews but also the Greek cultures were part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century newfound Christian community.<sup>119</sup>

In the Greco-Roman world, benefactors needed to exercise generosity towards others rather than themselves, and the recipients were to show gratitude towards the benefactor. Forgiveness and restoration were always in God's hands, not the people's. According to the author of Hebrews, there can be no negation of the apostate's second chances because it would be too costly or inconvenient for the patron. In other words, since God already knew that the people could not be faithful participants in the plan of redemption, God had to make it a unilateral covenant. As a result, let's see why the author of Hebrews was telling them that they enjoyed "better" things than the people of the OT had ever enjoyed. Rhetoric is used throughout the NT and is a dominant feature of Hebrews.

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<sup>118</sup> R. B. Hays, 'Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament,' ed. G. van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), pp. 3–19.

<sup>119</sup> For a deeper understanding of the usage and implications of ethos, see, Emily Welty, "The Communal Ethos of the Mennonite Central Committee: Testing the Bounds of Community in Kenya," *Communal Societies* 38, no. 1 (2018): 1–29; Naftali Loewenthal, "The Hasidic Ethos and the Schisms of Jewish Society," *Jewish History* 27, no. 2/4 (2013): 377–398; Szymon Wróbel, "Logos, Ethos, Pathos. Classical Rhetoric Revisited," *Polish Sociological Review* 191, no. 3 (2015): 401–421; Ian Wight, "Exploring Inter-Being and Inter-Becoming as Ehos-Making: The Integrally Informed Pursuit of Professional Community Well-being," *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 8, no. 3/4 (2013): 82; Toby E. Huff, "Some Historical Roots of the Ethos of Science," *Journal of Classical Sociology: JCS* 7, no. 2 (2007): 193–210.

## Review of the Use of Rhetoric in the Book of Hebrews

The author of Hebrews ensured that his audience, whomever they may be, would truly understand the rhetorical nature of his message by using a mixed approach that others did not. In doing so, he addressed the practical and ethical needs of the respective audiences during those times. To set the stage for exposition, this section will examine rhetorical genres, tools, connotations, sermons, confusion, creativity, elements, exhortation, typologies, direction, and goals.

### Rhetorical Genres

As explained earlier, rhetorical genres could deal with the past, the present, or the future. The author of Hebrews was primarily concerned with the future of the audience. Examples are Hebrews 2:1; 3:12; 6:11; 10:25; 12:14, one from each passage. There is a complexity, though, in Hebrews because the author's style is to switch from exposition to exhortation. He did this to explain the history of his *λογος* or arguments, to reassure the newness of their position in Christ, to clarify that the old was not new, and to reassure them of the superiority or better things in Christ. The future aspect would be proof of a deliberative style of rhetoric.

In his work on the structure of rhetoric in Hebrews, Lindars claimed that "the epideictic type, which consists of an oratorical display aimed at reinforcing positions already accepted," was not the true character of the book of Hebrews.<sup>120</sup> Regarding the author of Hebrews, Lindars again stated that "the character of Hebrews does not have the character of prosecution or defense" in a courtroom as forensic rhetoric does.<sup>121</sup> If these genres are dismissed, then, deliberative must be considered the dominant rhetorical genre in Hebrews.

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<sup>120</sup> Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," 383 (cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* III, iv).

<sup>121</sup> Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," 383.

## Rhetorical Tools

A major deliberative rhetoric tool in Hebrews was hyperbaton where word order is manipulated to make a point. The author presented this matter throughout the epistle guiding thoughts and direction. The author uses sixty episodes or verses within the book of Hebrews as one of the forms of hyperbaton in his exposition.<sup>122</sup> In the passages selected for this study: twice within the first (cf. 2:2, 2:3); three times within the second (cf. 3:14, 4:1, 4:11); five times within the third (cf. 5:11, 5:12, 6:1-2, 6:4, 6:11); and one time within the fourth (cf. 10:36). There were no indications of any hyperbaton within the fifth one.

The author of Hebrews used this rhetorical device to mark the boundaries, which signals when what comes next is directly related to the previous sentence. Not only were there literary interconnections, but this deliberative rhetoric showed interconnections in the middle of cultural dichotomies. Of interest is the fact that the author of Hebrews used the hyperbaton to move back and forth from exposition to exhortation. While the past is epideictic rhetoric, the tool is used deliberately with an eye toward the future and better things.

To solidify this position, the author of Hebrews used several typologies, but the most prominent one was the priesthood typology. Because the author was concerned with the direction of the church and not the destination, he emphasized the better things Christ had brought them as a community of faith. The rhetoric used by the author was deliberative because this type of rhetoric could address both Jewish and Greek simultaneously. The research will compare rhetoric used in canons and some literary features found in the OT and the NT. Of course, to see if there are any of the same features. But more importantly, to see any rhetorical connections between the two.

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<sup>122</sup> Baugh, *Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews*, 194–213.

## Rhetorical Connotations

The discussion of genres and tools leads to two matters of interest.<sup>123</sup> First, the author of Hebrews included himself as part of the community. The author's rhetoric could not have been epideictic or forensic if he had included himself in the supposed warnings. Second, the author taught them about a new position by exposition and exhortation, using a literary tool called the hyperbaton to show interconnectedness to something better.<sup>124</sup> His rhetoric could not have been epideictic nor forensic if something was better than before. Understanding the use of rhetoric allows the reader to grasp the connotation of the message.

Properly analyzing the selected passages would yield the intention of the author through συμβουλευτικόν or deliberative rhetoric. The writer of Hebrews was using the OT not as recapitulation, but as rhetorical dissuasion aimed towards a direction, not a destination. This research should analyze the interpretation of the passages with such a homiletical possibility in mind.<sup>125</sup> Equally, this research must confirm that by using Classical Greek Rhetoric, the epistle would never yield any rhetoric other than deliberative.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> NT scholars should be aware of the three types of rhetorical compositions that were available during the classical era, all of which were aimed at persuading their audiences, see Barnabas Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," *New Testament Studies* 35, no. 3 (1989): 382–406.

<sup>124</sup> S. M. Baugh, "Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 59, no. 2 (2017): 194–213.

<sup>125</sup> Classical rhetoric has some intricacies that other NT books did not possess. See George H Guthrie, "Inventing Hebrews: Design and Purpose in Ancient Rhetoric," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 3 (2019): 662–665. The OT writers were very familiar with ancient Jewish rhetoric as well. See Jan Joosten, "Biblical Rhetoric as Illustrated by Judah's Speech in Genesis 44:18–34," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41, no. 1 (2016): 15–30; P. K. Arrington, "Soliloquies Divine: God's Self-Addressed Rhetoric in the Old Testament," *Rhetorica* 34, no. 3 (2016): 223–242; Arthur J. Keefer, "Theology in Language, Rhetoric, and Beyond: Essays in Old and New Testament," Jack R. Lundbom, James Clarke, 2014. *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 23, no. 3 (2016): 340–341; S. D. Weeks, "Theology in Language, Rhetoric, and Beyond: Essays in Old and New Testament," written by Jack R. Lundbom, *Vetus Testamentum* 67, no. 3 (2017): 497–497.

<sup>126</sup> The deliberative rhetoric of the time was primarily used for five purposes: finances, war/peace, defense, import/exports, and legislation, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1359, but this was not all inclusive. Rhetorician would also use this type of rhetoric as the primary source of dissuasion. It must be understood that the author of Hebrews was attempting to employ rhetoric to convey a new message to the audience.

## Rhetorical Sermons

The book of Hebrews is a rhetorically powerful sermon in the NT, with what appears to be the same literary and rhetorical devices utilized historically in the OT. If so, this sermon has symbolic imagery and poetry, just as the Bible conveyed God's message to the people of God *vis-à-vis* the prophets.<sup>127</sup> The author appealed ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, and this reason was the essence of why the author used an auto-designation to his audience. Rhetoricians within the deliberative type of rhetoric will use the same style in their homiletics.<sup>128</sup>

Commenting on Hebrews, John Chrysostom indicated that the oration was not a warning but an exhortation. People kept the same concept until the nineteenth century when the infamous phrase "warning passages" emerged.<sup>129</sup> Chrysostom, a rhetorician himself, had the epithet Χρυσόστομος (*Chrysostomos*, anglicized as Chrysostom), meaning "golden mouthed" in classical Greek. The title was indicative of his celebrated eloquence, like the author of Hebrews.<sup>130</sup> The point to be remembered is that powerful oratory is a part of both Jewish and

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<sup>127</sup> Although the author of Hebrews makes a distinction between the old and new covenants as indicated by Hebrews 8:13, 9:15, for a discussion of the prophets and the old covenantal message see Jack R. Lundbom, *The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); Gary V. Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc, 2014); Ben Witherington III, *Isaiah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 13; Brent D. Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 59; Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 21.

<sup>128</sup> The different types of rhetoric are imperative to understand the message given to the people of God. Only the deliberative rhetoric can accomplish the purpose of delivering a new message of a new position in Christ when an author includes himself as part of the message.

<sup>129</sup> Even in the earlier centuries of church history, there were differences in the translation or interpretation of the book of Hebrews, perhaps because of the lack of knowledge of the classical Greek rhetorical presentation of the Epistle, see John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*: MPG vol. 18: 234.; John Chrysostom, "ΟΜΙΛΙΑ ΙΒ," in J.P. Mingne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, 63 (Paris, 1862), 423. This fourth century classical Greek rhetorician and preacher was the first to show the powerful use of rhetoric by the author of Hebrews. In the thirteen centuries however, the book of Hebrews was first divided into chapters and verses and thus apportionment started, see Thomas Aquinas, *In Omnes D. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria*, 2 (Taurini: Petri Marietti, 2924), 288. This is where the waters perhaps start to get muddy in relation to different interpretations.

<sup>130</sup> John Chrysostom was the first rhetorician to comment early on the epistle to the Hebrews see, "St. John Chrysostom" vol. 8, Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. Charles Herbermann (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910; J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: (He was named Chrysostom because that means Golder mouth) The Story of John*

Greek cultures.

## Rhetorical Confusion

According to Plato, rhetoric causes persuasion in the courts of law and other assemblies.<sup>131</sup> This principle applies Biblically insofar as the author of Hebrews was attempting to persuade his audience. Interestingly, Aristotle has indicated that it was complicated when a speaker uses the form of one genre (epideictic, forensic, or deliberative) for another.<sup>132</sup> This confusion happens when the rhetorician's attribution of blame or accusation instead of dissuasion when conveying a particular message. In Hebrews there is confusion when commentators argue that because there is a reference to the past, the rhetoric is intended to keep an audience firm in this position. The epideictic observations are exposition in a sermon with deliberative purposes of exhorting the listener to a better future.

With an expositional dilemma, this research must utilize the socio-linguistical method to ascertain the type of rhetorical argument that was being used by the author of Hebrews when he conveyed: (1) the known OT messages, (2) the supposed covenant formulary, (3) the NCP, (4) the new message, and (5) the exhortations to the Audience of Hebrews. The research must turn to the time when rhetoric was at its peak or the Classical Hellenistic Greek and Jewish rhetoric of

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*Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 1998), 4; Robert Carter, "The Chronology of St. John Chrysostom's Early Life," in *Traditio* 18:357–64 (1962). He emphatically denies that the Epistle to the Hebrews was anything but exhortations.

<sup>131</sup> The *Rhetoric of Alexander* (Rh. Al. 1421b8–10) identifies seven εἶδη, or species of persuasive speech: exhortation, dissuasion, eulogy, vituperation, accusation, defense, and investigation but these have been further subdivided in three groups by γένη or genres and this is the subject of this research. The main types of biblical persuasive speech are deliberative, epideictic, and forensic, see Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period*, 44.

<sup>132</sup> Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 44.

the times.<sup>133</sup> As a matter of distinction, it must be clear that Jewish rhetoric, unlike Greek rhetoric, sets forth an ethical and not practical approach to communication.

The author of Hebrews was in the middle of a dichotomy. That is individualized ethics vs. utilitarian actions that were right and useful for the benefit of a majority. The author used his rhetorical knowledge to assimilate both cultures unprecedentedly to accomplish both. In other words, Jewish culture was more concerned with the morality of their conduct. In contrast, the Hellenistic classical Greek civilization was adamant about only beneficial actions insofar as they promoted happiness to the most significant number of people, which should therefore be the guiding principle for their conduct. Inevitably, the author's importance in conveying ethical and practical guides to his audience was essential; thus, the only solution to the problem was to present both – to guide both.

On the side of ethical issues, the author of Hebrews uses historical data to show how God has dealt with His people in the past. On the other side, it shows how the author of Hebrews also uses the practical approach to change the conduct of most people, the people of God. This fact would be congruent with the idea that the Jewish people assimilated concepts of language and rhetoric of the ancient and medieval life and writings, which reflected both religious notions and ethnic as well as national praxis and identity.<sup>134</sup> Again, Hebrews' author conveys ethical and practical concerns with rhetorical usage in both cultures.

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<sup>133</sup> Jewish rhetoric was very concerned with absolute truth whereas the classical Greek rhetoric was more concerned with the methodology employed to obtain a result, not so much with absolute truth, see Erika Falk, "Jewish Laws of Speech: Toward a Multicultural Rhetoric," *The Howard Journal of Communications* 10 (1999): 15–28; Barry Brummett, "Rhetorical Theory as Heuristic and Moral: A Pedagogical Justification," *Communication Education* 33 (1984): 97–107; Lewis Glinert, "Conceptions of Language and Rhetoric in Ancient and Medieval Judaism," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22.1 (2020): 133–171.

<sup>134</sup> Phillip Mitsis, and Christos Tsagalis, *Allusion, Authority, and Truth: Critical Perspectives on Greek Poetic and Rhetorical Praxis*, edited by Mitsis, Phillip, Christos Tsagalis. 1. Aufl. ed. Vol. 7 (New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 153.

## Rhetorical Creativity

The word warning *νουθεσία per se* does not appear within the Epistle; however, the word warned *χρηματίζω* appears as a past participle of something that God had already done, according to most English translations. The semantic range of this word is vast, and it would include terms such as: to transact business, to manage public affairs, or to receive a name or title called. Notice that none of these appears to mean a warning of some sort. In its root form, Philo had written something similar but with a completely different interpretation, not as a warning but as an internal understanding that perhaps the author of Hebrews should have had.<sup>135</sup> No contemporary rhetorician appeared to have used the word warned in the same manner as found in the epistle.

The author of Hebrews, much like Paul, was a master at creating new words, and *κεχρημάτισται* (*kecreimatistai*) as inflicted was one of them. But, as far as this word means, a warning of sorts is far from the original intent that any rhetorician would have conveyed. In its most accurate sense, this word would have indicated a reveal of sorts, which is how other rhetoricians would have understood it, *supra*. As discussed previously, some scholars believe that Hebrews 12:25 contains the word twice, indicative of a warning and the summary of all other notifications. Still, again, this could not be farther from the truth. The New Living Translation perhaps captures the best example of the rhetorical nature of this passage with their rendition, "Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. If the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will

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<sup>135</sup> Philo, *On Joseph*, LCL 289, p. 176–77.

certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven!" This passage creatively used three classical forms of hyperbaton: closing, framing, and interlaced.<sup>136</sup>

## Rhetorical Elements

The author of the book of Hebrews used a writing pattern to ensure that his readers did not misconstrue the message.<sup>137</sup> This form can be broken down into points or elements. For this dissertation, the elements have been renamed and simplified as 1) audience, 2) action, 3) aim, and 4) account. The reason for the renaming of the elements should become apparent. First, these elements collectively were not utilized in the same manner as biblical authors formerly used warnings in the OT within the covenant formulary, which could be why they have been confused with epideictic rhetoric. Second, the author did not use these elements to keep grace out as the center of attention, which could be why they have been confused with forensic rhetoric. Thirdly, the author did not use these elements to show the possibility of someone losing this newfound gift but possession of better things in a deliberative way.

The development of these elements, brings forth within the pages of Hebrews: the solidification of a New Christian Position (cf. Hebrews 1:3, 2:10, 2:14-15, 2:17, 3:1, 3:13-14, 4:2, 4:14, 5:9, 6:1, 6:9, 6:11, 6:17-18, 7:19, 7:22, 7:25, 7:27, 8:6-7, 8:10, 8:12, 8:13, 9:11-12, 9:15, 9:24, 9:26, 9:28, 10:5, 10:10, 10:12, 10:14, 10:22-23, 11:6, 11:40, 12:2, 12:3, 12:7, 12:28,

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<sup>136</sup> Baugh, *Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews*, 196.

<sup>137</sup> McKnight identifies these as the "form" of the warning passages and he named them as 1) the subjects or audience who are either committing or in danger of committing, 2) the sin that leads to, 3) the exhortation which if not followed, leads to, 4) the consequence of that sin. By using these elements, McKnight identifies the synthetic approach to fully understand the warning passages and its application almost in a covenant formulary fashion. On the other hand, most *Anti-Eternal Security* scholars have not used these elements nor have pointed out their existence, as it minimizes their argument against the possibility of someone losing their salvation. The main proponent is Osborne where he concludes that "Hebrews is describing a real danger of apostasy that true believers can commit, and if they do so it is an unpardonable sin from which there is no possibility of repentance, but only of eternal judgment," (cf. Bateman, *Four Views on the Warning Passages*, 2007, 128).

13:11, 13:14).<sup>138</sup> No other rhetorical presentation, epideictic nor forensic, could convey to the audience a better position in Christ. Only the deliberative oratory of exhortation, prevalent within the classical Greek rhetoric during the Hellenistic time, can accomplish such a task.

The first element found in all the passages selected is the deliberative audience. This first part will not be another survey on the audiences of the book of Hebrews, but rather, a new concept much like the concept of the "we problem" in the book of Ephesians.<sup>139</sup> The author was not differentiating between Jews and Gentiles, but rather, including himself in the past transgressions and the OT covenant law. Believers are now in the new covenant in Christ. This covenant is superior to (better than) any other covenant in all respects and for all generations. As a result, the author and the audience now enjoy something better through Christ. A much better position to be in. Not the situation in the OT covenant formulary. This position was conveyed by exhortation using deliberative rhetoric. Because the deliberative audience needs to make the policy decision in the future sense, a determination of direction in Christ in an ethical way.

The second element is the deliberative action, which is closely related to the first one in that it brings forth the former transgressions or *πραξις* (*praxis*) in a bad sense: wicked deeds, crime, wicked doings in former practices, trickery, under activities or what they did, that the

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<sup>138</sup> The NT mention of the Messiah is quite extensive, unlike OT scholarship such as Ron Clements which believed that "virtually all of the major books on OT theology say very little at all about the messianic hope and, even when they do, do so in a very guarded and circumscribed way," c.f. R.E. Clements, "The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 43 (1989) 3–9. Roland Murphy also points out that the term "Messiah" appears as a *terminus technicus*, and not in the OT but rather, it was conceptualized by Christians as the term was used interchangeably with kings and priest who were "anointed." See R.E. Murphy, "Notes on Old Testament Messianism and Apologetics," *CBQ* 19 (1957) 5–15. This messianic hope, or the realization of it, is front and center in the book of Hebrews.

<sup>139</sup> Paul frequently changed from second person pronoun to the first person when addressing the churches. For example, in Ephesians 2:3, not only were "you readers" walking in sin, but "we all" were guilty of the same. This distinction has been attributed to the difference between Jews and Gentiles. See T.K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*. International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897), 43; Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, 2 vols. Anchor Bible 34A, 34B (Garden City: NY, Doubleday, 1974), 211–17.

audience in the book of Hebrews formerly dealt with.<sup>140</sup> By carefully analyzing the mood that the author of Hebrews wrote of any particular warning passages, this noun would be more applicable to their conducting activities, requiring a new type of appeal in the future. Again, a better position than the OT covenant formulary altogether. The situation appeared by dissuasion, the second part of the deliberative rhetoric utilized, and not by accusation or blame, as others may have inferred. This deliberative Action conveys a policy decision with ethical connotations for direction in this NCP. These are interchangeable terms.

The third element is the deliberative aim. This element is congruent with the appeal the author of Hebrews gives the readers. From *pay attention* περισσοτέρως προσέχειν (*perissoterōs prosechein*) in Hebrews 2:1, to *hold fast* κατέχωμεν (*katechōmen*) in Hebrews 10:23, it appears that there is a goal or an aim for the author to write to them.<sup>141</sup> From beginning to end, the author of Hebrews encouraged the readers to persevere (futuristic) in a newfound faith, heed the Word of God, and urge them because this perseverance is a necessary movement for this new covenantal community.<sup>142</sup> As a result of the covenantal community, the author of Hebrews shared

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<sup>140</sup> Although not necessarily listed as *πρᾶξις* in the book of Hebrews, the actions indicated within the book of Hebrews carried a past performance connotation that the author was bringing forth to their attention. There are six ways in which this word can be applied: a function implying sustain activity, ways of conducting oneself, engagement in a project that involves planning, performance of some deed, customary daily activity, or a state of being, condition or situation. See Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William F. Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 859–60.

<sup>141</sup> It is common in koine Greek that frequently the Greek word order has been altered to provide for the reader the exhortation word first. On the exhortation of Hebrews, cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 21–23; Rissi, *Theologie*, 8–25. See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 64 n 16. O. Glombitza argues that the triad of faith, hope, and love is the foundation for the entire exhortation in 10:19–25; see "Erwägungen zum kunstvollen Ansatz der Paraenese im Brief an die Hebräer - X 19–25," *NovT* 9 (1967) 132–50, here 146–47.

<sup>142</sup> The concept of movement is important because it shows progress. See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 22. By "movement," Attridge is referring to such expressions as approaching God (4:16), striving to enter the rest of God (4:11), and pressing on to maturity (6:1); in addition, he sees movement in running (12:1) and going forth (13:13). See esp. E. Gräßer, "Rechtfertigung im Hebräerbrief," in *Rechtfertigung. Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Friedrich, et al.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1976) 79–93, esp. 80–87; for the Jewish context, see esp. B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought* (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: University Press, 1980) 13–76.

the exhortations, the list of heroes of Israel, and the obedience now through faith in Christ. The author presented the contrast between the OT covenant formulary and the NCP. The difference was made by dissuasion and exhortation, again mainly using deliberative rhetoric to direct the policy decision in the future; thus, the deliberative aim is practical.

The fourth element is the deliberative account. McKnight calls this one the "consequences" in the warning passages. He contends that "if only one warning was considered," then a person could be tempted to think only of temporal punishments within the warning; however, he proposes to examine these "consequences" considering other consequences to understand the "danger" of non-persevering faith.<sup>143</sup> An account is a more proper terminology to employ. Simply because it gives a charge for actions as indicated in Romans 14:12, which coincidentally is the same language λόγον δώσει (*logon dosei*) found in Hebrews 13:17. But following McKnight's reasoning would vitiate the overall motif of the superiority of Christ. It would also vitiate the idea of better things that the new covenant in Christ has brought forward to the people of the NCP. They should not see them as consequences or "blessings and curses" as the covenant formulary did. They should use it as the deliberative account that will contemporaneously give the idea of better things—and again, done by dissuasion. Because the author used dissuasion, there are no consequences as they were in the OT, but decisions to be made by the audience. The deliberative account, in essence, is the decision to remain in the direction of Christ, which has valuable connotations.

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<sup>143</sup> I think McKnight gets this consequence wrong because it assumes that it is the person *sua sponte* that perseveres in the faith, which would be a contradiction found in Hebrews 12:1–3, which is Jesus the initiator and perfecter of our faith. Certainly, McKnight is not suggesting that we can help Jesus in this endeavor, yet this point is not too clear based on his essay. See S. McKnight, "The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions," *Trinity Journal* 13, no. 1 (1992): 14.

This form and its elements demonstrate progression. The progression appears clearly in Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, and 12:24, which coincidentally is essential because of the lesser to greater argument. The elements or components are the identification tools within the passages which point towards exhortation.

### **Rhetorical Exhortation**

The Greek word παράκλησις (*paraklēsis*) appears three times in the book of Hebrews (cf. Hebrews 6:16; 12:5; 13:22). Although not an exegetical paramount discovery nor a structural exuberant literary finding, perhaps it could further support the thesis for the warning passage phrase's curtailing for anyone losing something given as a gift. Literary communications in the first century were paramount to understanding the reason for the need for an appeal, especially in a rhetorical way.<sup>144</sup> In its homiletical genre, writing the epistle to the Hebrews makes sense in a world that has just found new freedom in Christ. This perseverance is now through Christ in contrast to their past. The better things found in Christ could not have the same implications as the former things that the covenant formulary brought to them; otherwise, this new position could not be better. The author of Hebrews used exhortation in a deliberative way to direct a new role for them. Now, since it is the benefactor (Jesus) who encourages the clients (people), then the Audience (Jews and Gentiles) is expected to make a policy decision and nothing more.

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<sup>144</sup> Three main questions are to be asked in relation to the need for exhortation or communication. First, what is the book about? Who is the book from? Who is the book for? See Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 26–54; H. Dubrow, *Genre*, The Critical Idiom Series 42 (London: Methuen, 1982); A Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Richard Burridge mentions the importance of genre as a crucial part of interpreting any text.<sup>145</sup> He also indicated that these scholarly communications were written "by people" and "for people," but he fails to mention the Holy Spirit's role in any of these communications.<sup>146</sup> In other words, if everyone remembers the dual authorship of scriptures θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*), which indicates why scripture works. As it states, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17); there would be no need for a warning. There would be a need for exhortation because Christ is Lord and Savior.

The appeal is quite different from what the OT people were used to in the form of covenant formulary. The covenant formulary entitled them to a synergy about the blessings and curses and how the priests were to present offerings on their behalf. Perhaps the reason for the lack of assimilation by scholars is that the word for helper, indicative of the Holy Spirit παράκλητος (*paraklētos*), does not appear in the Epistle to the Hebrews either. The term for Holy Spirit τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου (*tou pneumatos tou hagion*) is the classical Greek rendition of Holy Spirit, rather than the koine Greek version of πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, lacking the articles to both the adjective and the noun. The Holy Spirit was identified during the first century AD scriptures as the helper, directing all believers, not just some humans.<sup>147</sup> The Holy Spirit, is essential for any believer in their faith and key to exhortation.

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<sup>145</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998), 113.

<sup>146</sup> Redaction criticism has been responsible for refining the idea of specific communities. However, like in the Gospels, the people depicted reflect actual people and events happening the community, rather than having anything to do with the preferences of the author of the Epistle. See J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979); R.E. Brown, *John*, Anchor Commentary, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970); R.E. Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1979).

<sup>147</sup> As a cautionary note, perhaps the principle of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer should be given more weight as it relates to any possible synergism that perhaps was necessary in the past but that is no longer needed for the accomplishment of the works of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who believe in Jesus,

## Rhetorical Typologies

The most significant typology found in the book of Hebrews is the one concerned with the priesthood. One of the better things for the people of God, particularly with the figure of Melchizedek as found in Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20–7:25 and the striking correlation with Jesus as the great High Priest in Hebrews 4:14.<sup>148</sup> This correlation is a considerable difference between the OT covenant formulary and the NT rhetorical deliberative application. The author of Hebrews develops the divine merit qualifications of Jesus with that of the High Priest, which only can be compared, not with the earthly Priest. But with the heavenly one, as in the ones found in the OT with the figure of Melchizedek. The Jewish audience needed to change their minds about the old system they utilized. The Greek audience just needed to be informed of the news.

The author of Hebrews conveyed that the appointment of the High Priest was not through self-selection, based on class or money, but a divine mandate that does not come from men. The order comes from God, as indicated by the Psalter in the order of Melchizedek. Also, a fundamental lesser to greater argument should be missed by those who argue that someone can lose something if it is better. This reference is more ancient than the Levitical one, and Jesus meets all scriptural qualifications. These qualifications pass to those who trust Him and are now

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see A. Van de Beek and A. Van de Beek. "The Spirit of the Body of Christ: The Holy Spirit's Indwelling in the Church," *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 1 (2013): 252–265.

<sup>148</sup> It is important to notice that the mentioning of high priest is not the typical Levitical priest which Hosea and Jeremiah had mentioned of their wickedness as stated in Hosea 4:4 and Jeremiah 1:18, but to Melchizedek and the qualities that allow a priest to mediate with efficiency between men and God. See William Horbury, "The Aaronic Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Messianism Among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 243–48; Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources of the Fifth Century A.D. in the Epistle to the Hebrews* SNTSM 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); G. Berry, Priest, and Levites. *JBL* 42 (1923): 227–39; R. H. Kennett, Origin of the Aaronite Priesthood. *JTS* 6 (1904): 161–86; E. Nielsen. The Levites in Ancient Israel. *ASTI* 3 (1964): 16–27; M. Haran, Studies in the Account of the Levitical Cities. *JBL* 80 (1961): 45–54; Bryan J Whitfield, *Joshua Traditions, and the Argument of Hebrews 3 and 4*. Vol. Band 194. (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013), 207–09.

called recipients of the New Covenant, where a policy decision remains. The New Covenant places them in a new direction.

This high priest role is a central motif in the book of Hebrews. The author spends significant time in the Epistle to show how a new covenant, which Jesus brought about as the High Priest from above, has given the readers a New Christian Position. Now, far superior to the old one that they once enjoyed as described in Hebrews 8: 6.<sup>149</sup> Jesus was portrayed as our High Priest, *He συμπαῖσαι (sympateisai)* with our weaknesses, *He μετριοπαθεῖν (metriopathein)* with others, and *He ἔμαθεν (eimanthein)* from His suffering. These ideas all show Christ as the Merciful High Priest, which without question, shows the idea of better things. Better things are indicative of those in the covenant community through Christ alone without the necessity of further intervention or warning.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> This motif in the Epistle is far from rhetorical, placing Jesus at the center and it uses syntax or semantic of quotations to achieve more than a rhetorical effect as it relates to the high priest in the form of Jesus. See Barbara Hill Partee, "The Syntax and Semantic of Quotations," in *A Festschrift for Morris Halle* ed. Stephen R. Anderson and Paul Kiparsky. (New York: Holt Rineheart & Winston, 1973), 410–18; Ann Banfield, "Narrative Style and the Grammar of Direct and Indirect Speech," *Foundations of Language* 10 (1973), 1–39. For an explanation on how philosophers and linguistics work with words see J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 16. There is an important aspect in the way that the author of Hebrews continues to repeat this motif of high priest; see Deborah Tannen, *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Herbert Clark, *Using Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>150</sup> As the High Priest, Jesus is both the fulfillment of God's previous revelation in the OT and the now in the NT God-provided way for the people of the covenant to avoid the former faith of the disobedient see Gareth Lee. Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. (Cambridge, U.K; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 219. For a more comprehensive explanation pertaining the different pericopes covering the High Priest in Hebrews see James Kurian, *Jesus Our High Priest: PS 110, as the Substructure of Heb 5,1–7, 28* (European University Studies; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000); Cockerill explains that Kurian failed to see the typological relationship between the priesthood of Aaron and the Son that is developed in Hebrews 8:1-10-10:18 but gives him credit for recognizing other parts. Cockerill further develops the exposition by the author of Hebrews as it relates to the Son's grandeur (cf. 1:1–2:18) as he indicates that the author was in fact allowing the readers to "overhear" a grand conversation between God and His Son (cf. 1:5–15; 2:5–8), in order that the readers could appreciate fully, His role in providing "such a great salvation," and sufficiency as High Priest who alone is the provider of the removal of sins, and is the new access to God. Thus, the author of Hebrews, as a pastor was using rhetorical devices when permissible, to emphasize the effectiveness that Christ brought to all as the new and improved High Priest, but not rhetorically speaking as Christ the High Priest in a rhetorical way, but in a direct and positive way. The rhetorical part of the high priest had only to do with the former OT priest, which were sinful by nature with ineffective sacrifices that had to be done over and over, unlike Jesus once and for all sacrifice.

Using this priesthood typology, the author of Hebrews demonstrates that Jesus bridged the gap between heaven and earth through His sacrificial work and high priest ministry.<sup>151</sup> The author of Hebrews compared the exalted position of Christ, the eternal priesthood of Christ, and the New Covenant of Christ. They are now part of those who otherwise possessed an imperfect law, a Levitical priesthood, and an old covenant. The Epistle demonstrated a transition as the person of Christ perfected the contrast of the old system of rules.

The priesthood of the past was inadequate, and the perfect law of Christ has the adequacy of the forever priesthood. As the author puts it, Jesus fulfilled the functions of the old law by offering Himself as the final sacrifice. This sacrifice was far superior to the sacrifice practiced before. The author of Hebrews could only show the contrast deliberately and not forensically or epideictically. This sacrifice was suitable for the people of the NCP's past, present, and future transgressions. The author of Hebrews conveyed ideas to his audience in a new, effective, deliberative way. Because of a new position, a warning did not imply a loss. Still, an exhortation, and the people of God needed to make this ethical and utilitarian connection in a new direction.

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<sup>151</sup> The Christological application by the author of Hebrews can be seen with the use of seven key OT references: Psalm 8, 95, 110; Jeremiah 31; Habakkuk 2; Proverbs 3 and Exodus 19. It just so happened that these quotations or allusions by the author of Hebrews reflected Jesus' humanity and deity, as Jesus was God's representative and advocate to humanity simultaneously to those (emphasis added) who put their trust in Him and obey Him, which again points to an NCP. This is a huge gap between a holy God and a sinful humanity, whereby Jesus' sacrifice cleansed the sins of those who belong to the NCP since Jesus interceded for them, so that they could proclaim Him as Lord and Savior.

## Rhetorical Direction

Exhortation would be a matter of changing their minds regarding their position.<sup>152</sup> The author used mixed forms of rhetoric to show this direction. He did this in a rhetorical Jewish way, appealing to their ethical ethos by comparing the people of the OT and the people of the NCP. He did this in a Greek way, appealing to their utilitarian ethos regarding better things for all now in Jesus. Altogether, a new direction for them. The author revisited past things, showing better things in the future, which could have only been demonstrated by alluding to things of the past by quoting. The same could be seen in Paul's writings as he quoted OT scriptures.<sup>153</sup> The only way to deliver this message was to use a blend of rhetoric encompassing both cultures.

The author of Hebrews used direction when presenting his ideas of a heavenly gift, which is not dependent upon the recipients but upon the gift giver alone, in Hebrews 6:1-6. The Greek and Jewish rhetoric utilized by the author does not show Christ's sacrifice as dependent on humans. Instead, the covenant points to God. Jesus has given direction and made a way.

Notably, the word used by the author of Hebrews was not ἀποστασία; in fact, this word does not appear in the Epistle, but the author used παραρρέω (*parareo*) in Hebrews 2:1 and παραπίπτω (*parapipto*) in Hebrews 6:6, and they have been applied figuratively as apostasy. It does appear in its inflected form ἀποστρεφόμενοι or escape. A reader must notice that Schreiner, as a result, calls these pericopes warnings. The typical exposition would yield a somewhat

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<sup>152</sup> For a discussion regarding the perseverance of the saints, see Henry M. Knapp, "John Owen's Interpretation of Hebrews 6:4–6: Eternal Perseverance of the Saints in Puritan Exegesis," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 1 (2003): 29–52; "Some Arguments from SCRIPTURE, to Prove the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the SAINTS," *British Magazine, 1746-1751* (1749): 472–477; Patout J. Burns and Philosophy Documentation Center, "Human Agency in Augustine's Doctrine of Predestination and Perseverance," *Augustinian Studies* 48, no. 1;2; (2017): 45–71.

<sup>153</sup> Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 62–71.

congruent view with Schreiner's means of salvation view. Still, the author of Hebrews has used different OT motifs (rhetorically) to show some safety measures available to the people of faith.<sup>154</sup>

### **Rhetorical Goals**

The use of rhetoric was prevalent in both the Old and New Testament writings with the goal of persuading the readers (or, better said, the hearers) of the scripts to take a specific course of action.<sup>155</sup> Showing that an appeal would be more favored, nobler, or more just to any community members would be more plausible using deliberative rhetoric with dissuasion than any form of warning. The former, and not the latter, was how Greek oratory practice worked. Both cultures needed to understand the finality of Christ's works on the cross. In other words, there would be no further need for the people of God to do anything, as Christ did it all on the cross. The author of Hebrews took time to explain this message, using the ethics of the time and the practical tools available to him.

The people of God are now called a community of faith, a community of better things in Christ. This new faith community has a new outlook on life because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice. This sacrifice was made once and for all. It atoned all their sins, as expressed succinctly by the author in Hebrews 9:6. Only in presenting and addressing the duality of their situation does the author of Hebrews make sure that both cultures would understand the same message but with applications to their differences. A socio-linguistical approach captures the essence of this reality

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<sup>154</sup> For a basic understanding of the biblical theology of perseverance and assurance, see Thomas R. Schreiner, and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance & Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 19–45.

<sup>155</sup> The socio-rhetorical aspect of the Epistle of Hebrews was discussed by David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 2000, 40.

for the people of the Second Temple and the Hellenistic Period in which the author of Hebrews found himself.<sup>156</sup>

### Summary

Understanding how authors used classical rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period is essential for adequately interpreting the Book of Hebrews. In this chapter, classical rhetoric along with examples of rhetoric in the OT and NT were covered. Some material was general while other parts were more specific. The primary focus, though, was rhetoric that applied directly to Hebrews. That content was grouped under eleven headings. Because the rhetoric used by the author was deliberative, he could address both Jewish and Greek audiences simultaneously. The author of Hebrews was adamant about unity that came from having the same direction. This identity is embodied in the new position granted by the work of Jesus.

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<sup>156</sup> Gideon Bohak, "Jews and Christians in their Graeco-Roman Context: Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 39, no. 1 (2008): 107–108.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE NEW CHRISTIAN POSITION

In this section, the title of the chapter will also be the primary outline of the chapter. In other words, by grouping ideas under these three words, 1) New, 2) Christian, and 3) Position, the reader can see where the people of God were and where they are in Christ. Guidance is the essence of what the author of Hebrews gave in his writings. Ultimately, the author of the book of Hebrews gave the audience a direction that had a beginning, and now because of Christ, they have new standing or status.

#### NEW

To understand their newness, the author of Hebrews had to remind the audience of their oldness. The overview is why there is so much reference to the OT in his writings. The author of Hebrews was very expositional when he covered the Hebrew Covenants, the prophets, and other books of the OT. But he always pointed towards a new or better community encompassing two different cultures: Jewish and Greek. Using typologies, echoes, allusions, and quotations, the author showed the ultimate progression on their journey.

#### Hebrew Covenants and its Prophets

It appears that over time, the people of God formed a covenantal community based on the Torah, the writings, the prophets, both the former and the latter, and wisdom. The people of God had become accustomed to enjoying a unique position throughout the canonization of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>157</sup> It is crucial to notice that the book of Hebrews shows influence by the writing of the prophets in the Old Testament. Impacts include Jeremiah and Isaiah and perhaps other

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<sup>157</sup> As described herein, when the phrase Hebrew Bible is used, it refers to the Tanakh, which is the name for the entire Hebrew Bible, an acronym formed from the initial letters of the titles for its three major divisions: *Torah* or the Pentateuch, *Nehevim* or the Prophets, and *Ketubim* or the writings. The compilation of these books was approximately 2400 years ago. See The Jewish Publication Society, *Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: JPS, 1999), ix.

Second Temple period writings or deuterocanonical writings using quotations and allusions throughout the Epistle.

As the inscripturation and fixation of the Words in the Bible, God began to create treaties with the Israelites. These treaties emphasized the notion of a covenant or alliance. God instituted them, and His people were obligated to keep them.<sup>158</sup> Simply put, these covenants addressed how God graciously related to the Israelites and how they were to live daily. God created covenantal rights, and the Jewish people enjoyed them because they were rooted in God's primary rights as the universe's creator and elector of a particular community whose members relate to this God as their sovereign.<sup>159</sup> Covenants have an ethical separation undertone.

The book of Hebrews speaks of covenants more than any other book in the NT. Because of this, it is necessary to cover Hebrew covenants to understand the author's usage. A reader can notice that the author of Hebrews found himself speaking to a dual community: Jewish and Greek, and he intended to unite them as a community of faith. The union of these two cultures as one is why the revelation of the NCP is plausible. The author used echoes, allusions, and quotations from the OT to convey an ethical message and practical application, thus, addressing

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<sup>158</sup> For an overview of the biblical teaching on covenant as well as the practical significance of covenant for the Christian life, see Guy Prentiss Waters, *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020); Brandon D Crowe, *The Path of Faith: A Biblical Theology of Covenant and Law*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021); Stanley J Rodes, *From Faith to Faith: John Wesley's Covenant Theology and the Way of Salvation* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014); William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology*, rev. and enlarge, ed. Milton Keynes (England: Paternoster, 2013); Richard J. Bautch, and Gary N. Knoppers, *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015); Michael Scott Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006); Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>159</sup> Covenantal rights are described in detail by David Novak, *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory*, Core Textbook ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000); Mark Kinzer, *Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity*, edited by Jennifer M. Rosner, (Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2011); Robert W. Jenson and Eugene Korn, *Covenant and Hope: Christian and Jewish Reflections* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012); George Wesley Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant*, vol. 20 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970).

both cultures with typologies and intertextuality.<sup>160</sup> A better covenant in Christ appears to the Hebrews.<sup>161</sup> What about other writings?

### **The Pentateuch and the Psalms**

Of interest is that there is no direct quotation in the book of Hebrews to any Torah writings when viewed from the LXX perspective. There are still plenty of references and allusions from other OT books, particularly the Psalms. This fact may indicate that the author of Hebrews understood that the people of God had an established covenantal position concerning the law, something they could never lose. The author dissuaded those who had a false relationship to getting right with God. The concept of promise was applied to integrate these motifs in the OT and NT.<sup>162</sup> These ideas are covered under the currents of biblical literature of covenant blessings or promise theology, respectively.<sup>163</sup> The use of OT passages within the book of Hebrews has led to the term "Warning Passages," despite the word "warning" not being used in any sentence by the author as it relates to them presently or in the future. This vernacular focuses on whether a person can lose something, a type of debate. It appears that scholarly treatment should move beyond the restraints of using a warning to suggest other alternatives for nomenclature and genuinely understand the posture that the author of Hebrews was trying to

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<sup>160</sup> Jed Wyrick, "Biblical Characters in Hellenistic Judaism," *Religion Compass* 5, no. 1 (2011): 12–27.

<sup>161</sup> Many believe that these warning passage demonstrate that a person's actions can cause his or her status to change from righteous to wicked, but we know that there is security when one trusts in the Lord as indicated by Psalm 91. The author of Hebrews uses the known constructs of covenant formulary to show a continuity between the Jewish people's hope for their Messiah pursuant to the old covenant promises, and the new advent of a new covenant brought through Jesus, their long-awaited Messiah.

<sup>162</sup> Willis Judson Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963); John Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), 419; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (SBT 23; London: SCM Press, 1957), a translation of *Verheissung und Erfüllung* (1945).

<sup>163</sup> These concepts are expanded in Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, 1963.

convey to the people of the Second Temple times. How could such a conveyance have been done in the first-century diaspora and understood today? The only possible way to unite was a dual approach, and the socio-linguistical hermeneutical approach uncovers a new community.

### **The New Community: A Community of Faith**

Scriptures show that the Israelites were unique to God because He protected them, even when they had rejected Him.<sup>164</sup> In the book of Hebrews, the author was making sure for the audience to know that God spoke λαλήσας (*laleisas*) to the fathers. He also did to the prophets in many ways. For the people of the covenant, there has always been a glimmer of hope for them. Hope was available even before they came to be a nation. Still, there are better things for the people of God through Christ, which is the idea of better things that the author of Hebrews, time and again, refers to in his Epistle. This idea meant a union of cultures that the author must address practically to apply the message to both cultures.

In the scriptures, there is a progression in God's promise of a seed in Genesis 3:15, which already brought a shimmering of hope for salvation to fallen humankind (particularly for His people). The blood of the first murdered person (Abel) had brought witness to the inevitable fact that in and of itself, humankind selected God's judgment.<sup>165</sup> There was no possibility of

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<sup>164</sup> Interestingly, many scholars still fight over the status of God's covenant with Israel, see Avery Cardinal Dulles, "The Covenant with Israel," *First Things* (New York, N.Y.) no. 157 (2005): 16; James Brashler, "God's Covenant with Israel," *Presbyterian Outlook* (Richmond, VA) 199, no. 13 (2017): 49; Adam Gregerman, "Is the Biblical Land Promise Irrevocable? Post-Nostra Aetate Catholic Theologies of the Jewish Covenant and the Land of Israel," *Modern Theology* 34, no. 2 (2018): 137–158; Susan Haber, "God, Israel and Covenant: Unity in the Book of Deuteronomy," *European Judaism* 32, no. 1 (1999): 132–141; Benjamin Bury, "Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity" review by Mark S. Kinzer, Lutterworth, 2011, *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 20, no. 4 (2013): 592–594; Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'new Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8.

<sup>165</sup> There is a difference in how judgement is seen from the Christian perspective and the Jewish perspective, mainly because the expectation of the Messiah, see Steven J Keillor, *God's Judgments: Interpreting History and the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2007), 32–66; Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster Press, 2009), 72; James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*

reconciliation with God. Therefore, there could be no synergism to help God regarding His redemptive plan. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author shows that a better covenant, as already foreseen in the promised seed, in that God foresaw an entirely new possibility. This possibility was not available to the people of the covenant before. But by the blood of His Son, which is the idea of better things. This new covenant was different than the old one. The Jews, formerly known as the covenantal people, now have a new position: one that encompasses both Jews and Greeks, and the common denominator is Christ, which is why they must unite.

### **The Typologies**

The literary usage of typologies, as described by Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, can be seen in the Epistle.<sup>166</sup> The approach argues that typology refers to studying the Old Testament and its historical realities or types manifested by persons, events, and institutions. These typologies prefigured their antitypical aspects. They appeared and were consummated within the history now encompassed within the New Testament, particularly the book of Hebrews. These types found in the OT continued in the NT and were deemed types that foreshadowed what would appear in Christ, and the book of Hebrews is no exception. Again, the prime example is using the covenant as a redemptive plan or agreement to save His people. The author of Hebrews uses echoes, allusions, and quotations masterfully.

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(Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2010), 42–59; Joshua Schendel, "'That Justice Might Not be Infringed upon': The Judgement of God in the Passion of Christ in Irenaeus of Lyons," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 71, no. 2 (2018): 212–225; Pat Rogers, "God's Judgment upon Hereticks: A 'Lost' Satire on Thomas Woolston and Edmund Gibson," *The Review of English Studies* 65, no. 268 (2014): 78–98; Haim Shapira, "'For the Judgment is God's': Human Judgment and Divine Justice in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish Tradition," *The Journal of Law and Religion* 27, no. 2 (2012): 273–328.

<sup>166</sup> To conduct a proper exegetical analysis, the three horizons of biblical interpretation must be following specifically, textual, epochal, and canonical horizons, see Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 92–108; Jones Ngh Ndzi, "The New Exodus in Hebrews," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018). In this sense, the textual would be relative to the linguistic aspect of the method; the epochal with the cultural aspect of the method; and the canonical would have only to do with the theological aspect not covered by the methodology herein.

## The Echoes, Allusions, and Quotations Used from the OT Within Hebrews

Scholars' first identified warning passage is found in Hebrews 2:1–4 and alludes to the "message declared by angels" (cf. 2:2) found in Exodus 23:20–22—however, no direct quotation from the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews was alluding to this passage where the concept of "agency," where God's delegate or ambassador simply spoke in the first person on God's behalf, either as a theophany or Christophany.<sup>167</sup> The author of Hebrews reiterates that the "message" given by the angels to the people of God in the Old Testament proved reliable in its historical sense. The author of Hebrews used his deliberative rhetorical skills. He alluded to this episode from the OT while keeping the Jewish rhetoric of ethics front and center in this pericope. In doing so, they accomplished a focal point of history they could easily recall.

Some scholars would argue that this first pericope of warning passage indicates that the author was "warning of the dangers that attend neglect of the great deliverance and benefits announced in the good news." Still, they have failed to see the allusion that the author of the book of Hebrews made to Exodus 23:20–22. DeSilva acknowledges that the author of Hebrews used an enthymeme concerning the angels in this passage but did not mention Exodus 23:20–22.

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<sup>167</sup> René A López and Andrew S. Malone, "Identifying the 'Angel of the Lord' in the Book of Judges: A Model of Reconsidering the Referent in Other Old Testament Loci," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20, no. 1 (2010): 1–18. For a discussion on the distinction and history of the use of the terms theophany and Christophany, see James A Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament* (Chicago Moody, 1978), 5–10. Canonically speaking, the use of agency is only touched in the broader historical narrative of Genesis–2 Kings, where we can see that the Messenger of YHWH is speaking about YHWH in the first person, thereby creating an agency vis-à-vis a theophany; Bogdan G. Bucur, "Justin Martyr's Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies and the Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 75, no. 1 (2014): 34–51; Bogdan G. Bucur, "Scholarly Frameworks for Reading Irenaeus: The Question of Theophanies," *Vigiliae Christianae* 72, no. 3 (2018): 255–282; Daniel J. Harrington, "Transfiguration as Christophany," *America (New York, N.Y.: 1909)* 195, no. 3 (2006): 38–38; G. K. Beale, "Finding Christ in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 1 (2020): 25–50.

But he uses the general Torah while giving extra-canonical Jewish cultural information as the source from which he adduces his conclusion for the warning.<sup>168</sup>

As a result, the only plausible conclusion that DeSilva draws is that the transgressors of the message spoken through angels received punishment, examples of which were exile or death. But the same could not apply to the readers of the New Covenant. DeSilva made no distinction because he believed the author used epideictic rhetoric. Not deliberative, albeit the appeal from the Jewish rhetoric would supposedly support this finding. The author would not use Epideictic rhetoric to indicate that he was concerned with the practical approach of his message to them. In other words, he would have wanted the greater good of most people. Only deliberative rhetoric accomplishes this task.

Reading the Torah out of context would imply that the attention was on the messenger or the angel rather than the gospel's message. When the author of Hebrews used this historical data, it must show up considering the better message, a complete message that Jesus Christ Himself has brought or the λόγος *logos*. This λόγος appears nine times in the book of Hebrews. Still, none of the scholars reviewed, specifically, DeSilva, has failed to observe or even opine on this distinction, for example, as indicated by Hebrews 7:28. Scholars have also failed to treat this passage as rhetorically employed by the author within its deliberative rhetorical use. As a result, the attribution of a warning has emerged. The author tried to make the audience change their

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<sup>168</sup> DeSilva recognizes the lesser to greater argument by the author of the book of Hebrews, yet he fails to apply this same principle as it relates to the new covenant position that the receivers of the Epistle now enjoyed through Christ. The extra-canonical reference come from Jubilee 1:27; 2:1, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Maccabees to support extensions of a conviction of the past, without mentioning the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant. See DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 104–05. In other words, if we know that the author of Hebrews was making lesser to greater arguments, why not apply the same principle to the covenant position from lesser to greater accomplishment through Christ; to see that what Christ has done for them, which no other High Priest could have accomplished, thereby nullifying the notion of incompleteness and need of repetition of punishment.

minds in this passage. The only plausible tool for that was deliberative rhetoric that appealed to the Jewish rhetoric of ethics with practical implications.

The following identified warning passage by scholars appear in Hebrews 3:7–4:13, where there is an *in extenso* quotation from Psalm 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3:7–11. Here, the Hebrews' author quotes the history of antiquity and the Jews where God spoke to them. The author uses *Meribah* and *Messah*, "strife" and "temptation," to reference Israel's complaints against God at *Kadesh*.<sup>169</sup> Most scholars believe these words are a "warning" where God reminds the people of God about "not holding fast" to their faith. Still, such a belief would contradict the overall message in Epistle Hebrews 10:14. Coincidentally, if this passage reads as well as the previous one, keeping in mind the rhetorical approach that the author used, the reader can draw a different conclusion. Two cultures were being encouraged and dissuaded simultaneously using ethical and practical strategies to the messages. The author could only accomplish that with deliberative and Jewish rhetoric simultaneously.

Other scholars have dismissed the apparent difference, as if a perpetual state of uncertainty remains, only conditioned on our response or synergism. Why would God send His Son to bring a New Covenant if that were the case? If the same posture remained, like those from the OT, it would make God's message a lie (cf. Ezequiel 11:19, 36:26; Jeremiah 31:31–34). The significant discrepancy is that the *Anti-Eternal Security* camp, albeit their pietism, has failed to

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<sup>169</sup> According to the English Standard Version, Kadesh or Qadesh (in classical Hebrew Hebrew: קָדֵשׁ, from the root קִדַּשׁ "holy") is a place or name that occurs twenty-nine times in twenty-nine verses in the Hebrew Bible. It is a place on the south-eastern border of Palestine, about 165 miles from Horeb. It lay in the "wilderness" or "desert of Zin" (Genesis 14:7; Numbers 13:3–26; 14:29–33; 20:1; 27:14), on the border of Edom (20:16). It also could describe a site or sites located south of, or at the southern border of Canaan and the Kingdom of Judah. The historical nature of the mentioning of these passages can only be seen if the covenant presented by the author of Hebrews can also be seen as superior to the previous one through Christ alone. In other word, if the covenant that Christ brings is superior, why not attribute it superior qualities in the form of τετέλεσται *tetelestai* so that the thing done corresponds to what has been said, ordered, or commanded.

see the fundamental distinction that the New Covenant brings to the receivers, a new blessed hope, a superior covenant, an ideal way of salvation for the people of God. Notice how the author attempted to change the audience's mind. Neither epideictic nor forensic rhetoric would satisfy. Only using deliberative and Jewish rhetoric would accomplish this.

Within the same warning passage, a point of allusion is found in a pericope of the OT (cf. Genesis 2:2) in Hebrews 4:4. The author makes a distinct point of reference as "somewhere" in the scriptures. Not that the author did not know where, but the audience knew what he was talking about. The creation account has been essential for the Jewish people because the account in the scriptures is quite more controversial than any other account. Unlike any other Ancient Near East accounts, God rested.<sup>170</sup> The author of Hebrews again used historical data to convey to the readers of the Epistle that God had rested. Now, they enjoyed a better rest in Christ Jesus. The author's utilization of deliberative rhetoric to bring the message to the community of faith was to change the minds of his audience. He again used Hebrew and Greek rhetoric simultaneously. This method is how the author accomplished dissuasion and exhortation to convey the same message to people on two sides of a spectrum—a cultural one.

In the following warning passage, Hebrews 5:11–6:12, allusions are found in two separate Psalms, mainly Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4, wherein the author of Hebrews shows the superior status of the Son of God's Messiah. This status comes directly from God's declaration; royal language makes the priestly appointment explicit. The exact royal figure is now declared to

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<sup>170</sup> Victor Harold Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, revised and expanded, 4th ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 3–5. See the Hymn of Atum where Egyptians honored Atum as their creator, but unlike God, this god copulated with his own fist to created humans. The polemic stems from the infamous uses of parallelomania by other scholars as it relates to the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East Accounts, but that is not what we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

be a priest.<sup>171</sup> The idea of better things cannot be forgotten (cf. Hebrews 6:9). These verses bring the key concepts or Christological titles found in Hebrews (Son and High Priest) equally of divine appointment or origin. This passage brings neither blame, praise, accusation, nor defense, but he brings dissuasion and exhortation simultaneously.

A reader cannot miss the importance of the allusion to these two OT passages by the author of Hebrews. On the one hand, God Himself brings this message through His Son, and it is not based on dead works (cf. 6:1) but better things that belong to salvation (cf. 6:9) through a new High Priest, which a reader should neglect. On the other hand, the distinction between solid food and milk is typologically applied in the covenants' importance, indicating a better positional and uniqueness in this New Covenant.<sup>172</sup> A better covenantal position, the NCP, indicates better things that cannot compare with the things of the past. The author was again using his rhetorical

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<sup>171</sup> For a discussion on the superiority of Christ as the High Priest see Alexander Shumilin, "Melchizedek through the Eyes of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews." *Skhid: Analitichno-informatsiyni zhurnal* no. 5(163) (2019): 91–95; Piotr Blajer, "Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession. Audience-Oriented Criticism of Heb 3:1–6." *The Biblical Annals* 11, no. 2 (2021): 281–300; Clifford B Kvidahl, and Dan Lioy. "'You are a Priest Forever': An Exegetical and Biblical Theology of High Priestly Christology." *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 29, no. 1 (2020): 40–60; Abiola Mbamalu, "Jesus the Interceding High Priest: A Fresh Look at Hebrews 7:25." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1–6; Robert Jason Pickard, "Pioneer and Priest: Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, R. J. McKelvey, Lutterworth, 2017 "Reviews in Religion and Theology 26, no. 2 (2019): 291–293; Nicholas J Moore, "Sacrifice, Session and Intercession: The End of Christ's Offering in Hebrews." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42, no. 4 (2020): 521–541.

<sup>172</sup> The mentioning of a new covenant is an important aspect of what Jesus had accomplished on the cross which cannot be replicated, see Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'New Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Susan Haber, "From Priestly Torah to Christ Cultus: The Re-Vision of Covenant and Cult in Hebrews," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 1 (2005): 105–124. This is not to be viewed as replacement theology but as fulfillment, see William Madges, "Covenant, Universal Mission, and Fulfillment," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 12, no. 1 (2017): 1–13; Edward Kessler, "A Study of Covenant," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 4, no. 1 (2011, 2009): CP1-CP6; Cornelis P Bennema, "Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52, no. 3 (2009): 655; Adam Gregerman, "Superiority without Supersessionism: Walter Kasper, The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable and God's Covenant with the Jews," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 79, no. 1 (2018): 36–59; Franklin S Reding, "Hebrews 9:11–14," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 51, no. 1 (1997): 67–70; Andrew R. Davis, "A Biblical View of Covenants Old and New," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 81, no. 3 (2020): 631–648.

deliberative ability to accomplish the persuasion while taking them through a history lesson with the usage of Jewish rhetoric, using moral dissuasion.

Another identified warning passage by scholars appears in Hebrews 10:19–39. Here, the author of Hebrews uses two different references from the Old Testament. First, the author directly quotes Isaiah 26:20, and second, he couples it with Habakkuk 2:3f as a direct quotation from both prophets. There is a total of five references from the major prophets. Only one appears within the warning passages, and another is from the minor prophet. None seem to emerge in a "warning" manner but simply more exhortatory.<sup>173</sup> The author is again bringing deliberative rhetoric in his style into the Epistle while alluding to their Jewish rhetoric to understand the message correctly.

The first quotation indicates that there will be the restoration of the people of God, although they must hide for a little while. The second quotation reiterates that there will be a waiting period, all culminating with the arrival of the New Covenant, as the OT called it, fulfilled.<sup>174</sup> DeSilva acknowledges that the author of Hebrews underscored the advantage that the hearers of the Epistle were enjoying. This advantage was of the divine favor the unfailing mediator, Jesus, was bringing them.

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<sup>173</sup> Ellingworth argues that "there is a tendency of the author of Hebrews to modify the text quoted, either to make it fit more smoothly or to make the text support the argument more explicitly." See Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 38. Conversely, Ellingworth argues that it would be difficult to evaluate the degree of precision that the author of Hebrews used in quoting from memory based on the forgoing problem that the author used LXX textual tradition.

<sup>174</sup> The key reason for the different interpretation between the Armenian view on the warning passages and the reformed view can be simply described as incomplete view of the works of Christ by the Arminian camp. See Albert J Coetsee, "'By His Word'? Creation, Preservation and Consummation in the Book of Hebrews," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 74, no. 4 (2018): 1–13; Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Hebrew Bible Theology: A Jewish Descriptive Approach," *The Journal of Religion* 96, no. 2 (2016): 165–184; Timothy Bertolet, "Hebrews 5:7 as the Cry of the Davidic Sufferer," In *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 51, no. 1 (2017): 1–10. This main conceptual difference is further explained in detail in Bateman, *Four Views on the Warning Passage*, 2007, 23–85.

DeSilva once again makes this blessing conditional upon synergism rather than the unilateral accomplishment of Christ. Interestingly, the author again uses his rhetorical mastery when he references Hebrews 10:34 with better possessions, attempting to dissuade and encourage his audience with Jewish and Greek rhetoric through his homiletics. The author used a marvelous rendition of both types, but this rendition has perhaps not appeared by prominent academia until now.

The final warning passage, according to scholars, is Hebrews 12:14–29. There is a direct quotation from a minor prophet Haggai 2:6, found in Hebrews 12:26. The context for this quotation is to make sure that the audience of the book of Hebrews understands that "yet once more, I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This verse cannot be confused with something that would happen to the people of the covenant.<sup>175</sup> These are all the direct quotations or allusions found in the book of Hebrews relating only to the "warning passages" and the usage of the Old Testament scriptures. Again, the author uses his rhetorical influences when he references better blood in Hebrews 12:24, both to dissuade and encourage not to warn. The author also uses Jewish and Greek rhetoric to present his dissuasion and appeal to the audience, which should know the ethical and valuable applications.

Scholars concentrate on the remaining part of a believer and the constant possibility of God's wrath rather than on the final work of Christ on the cross. DeSilva focuses on the "removal

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<sup>175</sup> The climate of the times in Haggai was that the people of Judah had been exiled to Babylon in 556 B.C. and Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed. Under Cyrus, the king of Persia, the Jews were allowed to return to Judah and rebuild their Temple. This is an event very familiar to all Jews who read the book of Hebrews. Haggai's message encouraged the people of God to finish rebuilding the temple of God. The message in the book of Hebrews encouraged the new believers to persevere in faith because Jesus Himself was the initiator and perfecter of this new thing that was happening to them (cf. Heb 12:2). The biggest exhortation was about the contrast between the OT and NT as it relates to Christ's work of completion (cf. Heb 12:3), and what that accomplishment brought through faith, a new relationship with the Father through Christ. Again, this main distinction has been underemphasized by the *Anti-Eternal Security* camp and their interpretation of the warning passages.

of the things shaken" and denies the possibility that, based on a New Covenant, a believer enters the "unshakable kingdom" upon acceptance of the New Covenant.<sup>176</sup> This acceptance is not conditioned on performance by the recipients of the New Covenant. There is no other way to present this distinction than by using deliberative rhetoric.

Scholarship cannot say that the author of Hebrews was trying to convey a warning while using Jewish and Greek rhetoric to the new people of faith in Christ. He wanted to persuade them of a recent, better policy decision in Christ. If so, this would have reminded them of what the OT community members had to face. But, if it were a new covenant, it would no longer employ warning implications as the biblical authors had to do in the past or by the exact formulation of the old covenant formulary. Rhetoric and not warning was how to accomplish the intended message to this diverse Christian hybrid community.<sup>177</sup> Using deliberative rhetoric, the author addressed the socio-linguistic need of this new community.

### **Usage of Warnings in the Old Testament**

Using a warning (or an indication of a warning) was prolific in the OT. For example, one of the words for warning in Hebrew was נָצַח (*nace*), and it has a peculiar semantic range of something lifted, standard, signal, signal pole, ensign, banner, sign, or sail. The NASB only translated it as "warning" in Numbers 26:10 (NASB). It could also show the words עֹד (*ood*) and זָהָר (*zawhar*), both of which are verbs indicating a warning, and the KJV version had given the warning connotation when the KJV translated these words. The reader can safely assume that the

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<sup>176</sup> DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 104-05.

<sup>177</sup> The same can be said of Paul, as seen in Woo Min Lee, "A Hybrid Christian Identity in Philippians 1:15–18," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1-9.

OT was full of warnings in the Pentateuch, the prophets, and even the wisdom literature, but never did the writer includes himself in the warnings.<sup>178</sup>

Why would the Word of God use so many "warnings" for His people? Although it would go beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully understand the reasons, the matter of sin before Jesus' arrival must be briefly discussed. The OT carried a sense of divine justice and retribution throughout the canon as it relates to the people of God.<sup>179</sup> This divine justice and retribution was a permanent mark on the people of God, even after the people established the sacrificial system. It would take an act of God for that posture of divine justice and submission to reemerge as one of victory and hope, expressed so eloquently by the author of Hebrews. However, for the people of the old covenant, a warning mainly came in the form of retribution. Why would God implement a new covenant without distinction between the old and the new? There was an actual need for something better, something perpetual.

## Idolatry

For example, an idol פֶּסֶל (*phe'sel*) is an object of physical nature that represents a deity. This idol usually becomes an object of worship or service. As a result, YHWH instructed His people not to have them (Exodus 20:4). Because idolatry is worshipping "something" other than

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<sup>178</sup> There are too many scholars that mention the different warnings throughout the OT, here are only a selected few to drive this point home, see Jang Seok-Jeong, "The Warning of the Seventh Plague (Ex 9: 13–21) Reconsidered," *Korean Journal of Old Testament Studies* 17, no. 2 (2011): 12–32; Nzuzi Mukawa, "Micah's Warning," *Canadian Mennonite (Waterloo)* 13, no. 16 (2009): 4; David Janzen, "'What He did for Me': David's Warning about Joab in 1 Kings 2.5," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39, no. 3 (2015): 265–279; Shawn Zelig Aster, "Isaiah 31 as a Response to Rebellions Against Assyria in Philistia," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 2 (2017): 347–361.

<sup>179</sup> It can be seen the same divine justice and retribution even in ANE texts, see Angelika Berlejung, "Sin and Punishment: The Ethics of Divine Justice and Retribution in Ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament Texts," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 69, no. 3 (2015): 272–287; Jon D Levenson, "Justice and History in the Old Testament: The Evolution of Divine Retribution in the Historiographies of the Wilderness Generation; Richard Adamiak," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (1987): 158–160; Philippe de Robert "R. Adamiak, Justice and History in the Old Testament, the Evolution of Divine Retribution in the Historiographies of the Wilderness Generation, 1982," *Revue d'Histoire Et De Philosophie Religieuses* 66, no. 2 (1986): 218–219.

the One True God, the sin of idolatry is severe, as it strikes at the character of God. Those who commit idolatry are, in fact, "declaring" that יהוה (Yehovah) is not the One True God and that other "gods" can share His glory and honor. Idolatry was rampant and had been in the world of ancient Israel from its inception, and they needed to take heed.

By analyzing the OT prophets who conveyed the message of idolatry (worshiping of pagan gods), the reader can see that the same principles would apply to the current practice of idolatry. The research will help provide the biblical understanding and sensitivity to the difference in the period between antiquity and the people of the NCP, where the author of Hebrews was placing emphasis. To accomplish this, critical prophetic texts and key motifs, other prophets, and an analysis of the ANE and other cultures will be used to see if the author of Hebrews used the same covenant formulary or something different. The author of Hebrews showed progression in presenting to Jews and Greeks, with respective rhetorical applications of the same message. In his appeal, he used prophetic texts, restoration motifs, prophets of OT, and idolatry rampant in Greek cultures. The author used key prophetic texts to show both cultures something.

### **Key Prophetic Texts**

Although not implicitly, the author of Hebrews showed the same prohibition of idolatry from the OT, repeated throughout the Pentateuch, and the OT Latter Prophets echoed it through their oracles.<sup>180</sup> This prohibition seems to underlie the prophetic condemnation of Israel and Judah in Jeremiah 11:10–13. Isaiah, for example, denied that idols were alive in Isaiah 42:17 and thus ridiculed the worship of lifeless and impotent objects made by other humans. Because of

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<sup>180</sup> Sailhamer. *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 15.

God's covenant with Israel, an idol was an abomination in Isaiah 44:19; time and again, the prophets conveyed this message in Jeremiah 16:18.<sup>181</sup> The author of Hebrews used his Jewish rhetorical knowledge as a tool with an ethical ethos application.

For the Israelites, the prophet Ezekiel made it clear that idols were an "abomination" that polluted the land in Ezekiel 5:11. These idols were הֶבֶל (*hebel*) "worthless" and insubstantial according to the prophets in Jeremiah 10:14-15. These idols were שֶׁקֶר (*sheqer*) "deceitful," and the Former Prophets gave a falsehood in Jeremiah 51:17. Other descriptions, such as שָׁוְיָ (*shaw*) "empty vanity," use these prophetic texts based on the Latter Prophets. Despite the prohibition by God and the prophets, idolatry continued throughout Israel's history.

The prophet Isaiah argued that YHWH was incomparable עָרָךְ (*'arak*). As a result, no form of "idol" could represent Him in Isaiah 40:18. An idol was a שִׁקְוָט (*shiqquwt*) "detestable" thing according to the prophets in Ezekiel 20:7. Even Habakkuk called the images made by craftsman דֹּמָם (*duwmam*) "dumb" mute, worthless idols. Idols polluted anyone using them and rendered them unclean before God. The Hebrews used the word תְּבוּנָה *tabuwn* to identify things that people understood to go "against" established religious or ethical conventions; idolatry was one of them. As it shows, these OT warnings came with a retributory portion as the Nation of Israel went from bad to worse in their idolatry. The same idolatry was seen during the times of the author of Hebrews by the Greeks. As a result, he used deliberative rhetoric so that the people could have a practical approach to change from their idolatry in a policy decision that needed to be taken by the entire community, just as the NCP people would.

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<sup>181</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. First ed. vol. 3, 379.

## Restoration Motifs

To the Israelites, the central motif found in the Latter Prophets as it relates to idolatry is dominant: "There is no other" God but Him.<sup>182</sup> This point appears in Isaiah 45:5-22. The prophet presents a contrast with Israel cited as חֹמֶר (*chomer*) "clay," and God is the יָצָר (*yatsar*) "potter," one who "forms" a clear distinction between God and idols. Isaiah contrasted the work of men vs. the work of God in Isaiah 43, where men's hands are forming יָצָר "idols" vs. God יָצָר Israel to reflect His "glory" and "praise." This distinction is evident in God's plan to restore His people. This restoration was progressive, never regressive.

To the Greeks, a second motif could be expressed by Ezekiel 36:24–37:14: God brought His people out of death by creating them in His glorious image. As a polemic, the prophet spoke of restoration—of a person and argued against the idolatry of human-made images.<sup>183</sup> God is into remolding or reshaping His people throughout the history of Israel and today. Coincidentally, both Isaiah and Ezekiel bring the same notion of restoration.<sup>184</sup> The author of Hebrews eloquently presents this same motif by using Jewish and Greek rhetoric applicable to the areas of cultures that would address their individual needs. The Epistle addressed practical and ethical concerns at the center of the Hellenistic period. No other form of rhetoric could accomplish this duality of the message with this duality of cultures and have the same results. Ultimately, to bring the people of God to the same level playing field but without the same ramifications that the old covenant had for the people of God. Here is another example setting the same idea.

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<sup>182</sup> Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 275.

<sup>183</sup> Currid, *Against the Gods*, 97.

<sup>184</sup> Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 280.

### Another Prophet: Hosea 1-3

The author of Hebrews, perhaps thinking about Hosea 1, alluded that the passages can metaphorically describe the covenant relationship between God and Israel. Hosea was instructed to marry Gomer, the prostitute, just like Israel had been unfaithful to God. The people of Israel had sinned against God, as the adulterous woman sins against her husband, and Israel certainly felt God's judgment. They fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., as predicted by מִנַּחֲמֵי יְהוָה (*Minachar Yehovah*), forsaking the Lord. The multiple children must indicate the numerous times that Israel committed adultery (idolatry) against God. Although Israel was unfaithful, God's covenant with Moses remained unchanged, as seen in Deuteronomy 30:1–10, foreshadowing Jeremiah's prophecies in Jeremiah 29:11–14; 31:31–40 and Ezekiel in Ezekiel 11:16–21.<sup>185</sup> This covenant was of the day when the Messiah would unite all the people of God under Christ as chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, and God's possession. The author of Hebrews could only assimilate this message using rhetoric that addressed both cultures.

An examination of Hosea 2 shows that the people of God were worshiping false gods (especially Baal), the god they believed controlled the weather for farming, shelter, and clothing, instead of the one true God. As a result, God fenced Israel with thorn bushes and blocked her path by making the reward of idol worship so disappointing that the people would return to God, but to no avail. The Israelites had forgotten that God gave them the land as a gift in Deuteronomy 32:49, and they did not get rid of the Baal worshipers or worship centers as commanded but instead tolerated it. Nevertheless, God loved unfaithful Israel because of His prior covenant. The word "covenant" appears in Hosea 2:18 concerning animals who were not to

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<sup>185</sup> Robert Alan Hammer, "The New Covenant of Moses," *Judaism* 27, no. 3 (1978): 345–350.

hurt Israel once God removed the name of Baal from their lips.<sup>186</sup> Because of the covenant, God's gift for His people has been the gift of compassion, as indicated in verse nineteen. Again, using both types of rhetoric, the author of Hebrews could address both Greeks and Jewish differences in how they still worshiped false gods.

In Hosea 3, the author showed how the nation of Israel's exile was to experience a time of purification in a foreign land. But God, through the covenant, still loved them so that He would take them back. God commanded Hosea to have the same forgiving spirit as Gomer. Even though he could divorce her, God told Hosea to repurchase and love her. Gomer was no longer worth much to anyone except her husband when he repurchased her for a small amount, which is the perfect example of God's love for His people.

The author of Hebrews must have known that the parallel between Gomer's isolation and Israel's desolation is formidable. Both describe prohibitions such as sex, sacrifices, and kings or priests going on for a while to purify them. Prophetic words found in Hosea 3:5, "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David, their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," are most definitely talking about the New Covenant. Jesus would fulfill, as Hosea puts it, "in the last" days. Inevitably, we know that the author of Hebrews was aware of the contents of the book of Ezekiel and other prophets contained herein. Still, we can see that retribution is used without the same negative connotations but in a rhetorical way that would convey the messages to the NCP to both cultures. There is no question that the author of Hebrews was familiar with the stories of the OT, as he conveyed them repeatedly to make his rhetorical points. It would not be illogical to think that any of the stories

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<sup>186</sup> A. A. Macintosh, "Eric J. Tully, *Hosea: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, vol. 65, issue 1 (2020): 255–257.

of the OT would appear and be used so that the author would accomplish the message to both cultures. Masterfully, he used his scriptural knowledge, not as recapitulation but as lessons for both cultures that he conveyed using his knowledge of the respective rhetoric addressing the separate cultural concerns of Jews and Greeks.

### **ANE Cultures' Impact on Idolatry**

The author used his ancestral knowledge not implicitly but symbolically to convey his message. For example, a close look at the ANE text (Akkadian, to be exact) will explain how statues or "idols" were made.<sup>187</sup> The people created these idols of specific materials and followed detailed manufacturing procedures. An example can emerge in the figure of Marduk. Ironically, people presumed that the Akkadians had neglected the cult. As a result, the image of Marduk did not appear as before since it had lost its lust. But, for the Babylonians, the images of deities had to be made in a specific way. Otherwise, the statutes would be illegitimate.

In Mesopotamia and Egypt, the available ANE texts give information about the statues' manufacturing, maintenance, and appearance, typical life-size images.<sup>188</sup> Some images depicted animals as part-human and part-animal, and these gods appeared anthropomorphically.<sup>189</sup> According to scholars, the only basis for determining whether a statue representing a god in ancient Mesopotamia was the weapon or symbol that characterized their god. Thus, idols were prolific in ANE cultures.

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<sup>187</sup> A. Leo Oppenheim and Erica Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, Revised (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 186.

<sup>188</sup> William W. Hallo, *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres*, vol. 35 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 11.

<sup>189</sup> Gary, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 377.

These ANE cultures were closely intertwined with Israel; as cultures entered treatises, people conquered people, and people mixed traditions between these cultures in antiquity. It was inevitable that these idolatrous practices would percolate within the Hebrew cultures. As the prophets related the message to the people of God, it was apparent that this sin of idolatry was challenging to overcome. It was forbidden then, as it is now (albeit in different forms), for the people of the NCP and the Greeks needed a reminder.

An image cannot represent respect for God's actual image. Although there is no specific commandment prohibiting remembering God, the idea of idolatry carries the connotation that the image represents the "supernatural." Thus, the images themselves become the object of worship. So, idolatry is the "service or worship" of an image, item, entity, person, or anything else that would replace God in a person's life. It does not have to be an image, like in the OT, but it can be anything that replaces Jesus as the center of our beliefs. The author of Hebrews discussed this. The main problem of the Greek people was that they had multiple gods.

The Bible is clear that man was created in the image of God. Christ is the image of God par excellence canonically as seen in Gen 1:26–27; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3. God revealed Himself to Israel at the inauguration of the Mosaic covenant, and He forbade the use of any materials or any visible thing as an object of worship. That was the message that the Latter Prophets promulgated, a jealous God. Now, God has revealed a better covenant because of the superiority of Christ in all respects. The people of God do not have to live with the same fears as the predecessors of Israel.<sup>190</sup> The incarnation of Christ is the visible image of the invisible God,

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<sup>190</sup> Here is the spectrum that outlines those scholars who agree one can't lose his or her salvation, see Schreiner, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance & Assurance*, 21; John MacArthur, *The Security of Salvation: Why You Can't Lose it; Study Notes, Romans 5:1–11*, (Panorama City, Ca: Word of Grace Communications, 1983); Kent Dunnington, "Justification by Faith," *Religious Studies* 54, no. 4 (2018): 527–547; R. T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985); Erich Sauer, *In the Arena of Faith: A Call to a Consecrated Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956); Charles F. Stanley, *Eternal Security* (Nashville: Thomas-Nelson Pub., 1990). There are many more, this just gives a spectrum. Also, the same can be said about

Col. 1:15. He is the only one worthy of worship, a message conveyed by the author of Hebrews with the idea of better things applied rhetorically. The implication is that a warning, if any, must be of direction, not of destination as before.

### **The Progression**

The Jewish people have progressed on their journey, according to the scriptures, miraculously. From the birth of this community—to the trajectory taken—God has been the center of it all. Now, in the middle of the Hellenistic period, God wanted to intervene yet once more. There is a need to explore the usage of warnings in the OT by comparing some vital prophetic texts and restoration motifs and comparing three chapters of Hosea with what the author of Hebrews attempted to convey to the new community of faith. In doing so, it will reveal a progression that the author of Hebrews was taking the audience through from where they were (OT) to where they need to be (NT). A comparison of other ANE cultures has emerged. The research analyzed idolatry's impact on Jewish and contemporary cultures to establish connections, if any, in this progression. The people of the first covenant were familiar with covenants that included blessings and curses in the form of warnings.

In contrast, comparing the usage of warnings in the NT must be examined to understand whether—the messages of the book of Hebrews were warnings. The passages analyzed will be expressed as appeals, not to recapitulate, but to show the progression of the redemptive plan for the people of God that the author showed using the OT in his NT message. These appeals will appear as the book's concepts of salvation and faith emerge. The researcher will compare the

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those scholars who think that salvation can be lost, see I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1974), 24; John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1952), 551; Robert D. Knudsen, *Faith and Perseverance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958), 90.

identity of the Jewish people to other cultures, showing the faith God wanted them to keep and share. God's better covenant in Christ is at the center of the progression. God revealed this progression in the form of typologies, as discussed above.

## CHRISTIAN

According to the scriptures, followers of Jesus were first called Christians in a derogatory way (cf. Acts 11:26). Using biblical authors, particularly the book of Hebrews, God wanted to show His people their new standing with Him—a new position in Christ. It has appeared in this research as the New Christian Position. But this position needed new terminology and concepts to be explained to this new community. The author of Hebrews gave these concepts and language to the audience in a deliberative way.

### Terminology

A comparative semantic word study ascertaining the legal terminology employed within the Epistle of Hebrews will show how often the author of Hebrews, much like the prophets in the Old Testament, repeated the covenantal condition to the people of God. However, the covenant community was already familiar with the legal language expressed within the Torah.<sup>191</sup> The covenant references and allusions to the Psalter can be seen within the book of Hebrews as

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<sup>191</sup> Within the Hope of Israel, the canon presents the resurrection of Christ as *Apologia Pro Scriptura* where Christ brings the ultimate soteriology to His people, see Brandon D. Crowe, *The Hope of Israel: The Resurrection of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), as this same principle should be observed within the Epistle of Hebrews; There is an Eternal Inheritance of Salvation presented in other books of the New Testament that coincide with the principle presented by the author of the book of Hebrews, see Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015). The prophets used tautology, superlatives, gemination, echo and anaphora in their statements, as a rhetorical device when expressing the covenantal relationship, the people of God enjoyed, see Jack R Lundbom, *The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 167–207; Theodore Austin Holt, "The Rhetoric of Law and the Epistle to the Hebrews," (Abilene Christian University, 2015), 11. The prophets repeated stories about God so that the people of God may be reminded of the covenant they had with God, see Gary V. Smith and David M. Howard Jr., *Interpreting The Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2016), 24.

represented by the term בְּרִית (*bereeth*) in the Psalms but repeated as quotations in the literary present.<sup>192</sup> The mentioning of the covenant in the book of Hebrews appears eighteen times as διαθήκη (*diathēkē*) and always indicates a contrast between old and new or first and new covenant. A reader must know that the difference is unmistakable. God made the first covenant between men and God through men, vs. this new covenant between God and His people through Christ, which the covenantal community has established with.<sup>193</sup> The book of Hebrews appears full of these examples, by inner-biblical exegesis and allusions, to the Old Testament. This reference will serve as the background of the interpretative efforts. Jewish rhetoric must be a guiding principle when interpreting these allusions, quotations, or interconnections. But why so much detail in communicating a message to the people of God? A reader must visit the OT to understand how the messengers used the warnings in the OT because of idolatry and how some prophetic text would accomplish God's message for His people not only for Restoration but for Preservation.

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<sup>192</sup> The literary present of present tense with reference to Levitical cult in Hebrews has a three leveled classification of the Greek present tense, mainly historical, progressive, and gnomic, see Elliot Yong Lee, "Literary Present in the Book of Hebrews," (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2015), 3. The issue with this is that some commentators have argued that the present tense used of the Levitical cult in the book of Hebrews are progressive presents, which support the view that Hebrews was written prior to the AD 70 destruction of the temple, and it further supports my theory that the author of Hebrews was very familiar with the covenantal position that they enjoyed.

<sup>193</sup> The term covenant is an agreement which is enacted or effectuated between two parties. The basic premise is that either one or both make a promise under oath to do an act or refrain from doing an act, which are agreed upon by the parties. As noted, the OT covenants were made between men and God, whereas the NT covenant with His people is made through Jesus, which makes it a far better covenant as indicated in Hebrews 7:22; Heb 8:6–10; Heb 8:13; Heb 9:15; Heb 10:16; Heb 12:24, and Heb 3:20. In both canons, the word covenant is the major metaphor that is used to describe the relation between God and Israel or God and His people. This covenant is an instrument that constitutes the rule of the kingdom of God, and as apparent by the author of Hebrews, the new covenant brought by Jesus' sacrifice is a much better covenant than the one established in the OT. Although there are formal elements for the establishment of a covenant, for purposes of this dissertation, those elements are immaterial. Further, there is no need to mention all the covenant established in the OT, Mosaic, Davidic, Abrahamic, or any other, since the significance of the establishment of this new covenant covers all other former covenants made through men. For a more complete explanation of covenants, see David N. Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed., vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1179–1201.

## The Exhortation Passages and the Use of the OT

Traditionally, and because of hermeneutics and exposition, it is known that the book of Hebrews has plenty of literary influences based on the Old Testament canon. Thirty-five direct quotes come directly from it.<sup>194</sup> In the past four decades, scholarship has focused on literary-critical issues of the book of Hebrews. This focus has prompted scholars to work on the hermeneutical use of the OT to discover the proper interpretation. This interpretation can appear by examining the NT author's passages from the OT materials in the book of Hebrews independently within the appropriate context. As a result, scholars have adduced a covenant theology in the book of Hebrews. They have indicated that perhaps the author used the literary form of a covenant to deliver a message of encouragement.<sup>195</sup> But, there is a distinction between the covenant formularies and how the author of Hebrews presented in a rhetorical sense by trying to influence a policy decision with deliberative rhetoric. This decision is now an appeal, not a warning.

There is a need to adequately analyze the Hellenistic influences against the fact that the Jews understood their coveted covenantal position within the construct of other cultures.<sup>196</sup> In the

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<sup>194</sup> A careful review indicates that the canonical mentions are divided as follow: thirteen quotations are from the Pentateuch, fourteen from the Psalms, five from the major prophets, two from the minor prophets, and one from wisdom literature as indicated by Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 37.

<sup>195</sup> This idea of the literary form of a covenant was first presented by Henry Walter Clary, *Hebrews as a Covenant Document: A New Proposal* (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Dissertation, 2007), 13 as he argues that “the book of Hebrews must have early on come to fill a scriptural void in the NT era as an authoritative explanation of the state and nature of the new covenant that Christ” brought forth.

<sup>196</sup> To prove that the Jewish people were covenantal people within the context of the Old Testament covenants (Abrahamic and Mosaic), the word “seed” [זרע / σπέρμα] most directly designates a category in biology or ethnicity distinguished from the “nations/Gentiles [גוֹיִם / ἔθνη] and this is the basic principle that separates the Jewish people, see Wellum, *Progressive Covenantalism*, 8. To analyze the constructs of other cultures as well as the Jewish people, it is important to know that for example, as it relates to the creation of the world, the Ancient Near Eastern civilizations had similar themes centralized in cosmology, which these cultures expressed in many forms. One of these forms is “evil dragon,” or “chaos comp,” where a hero overcame this evil. We see that time and again, these accounts depict extra-biblical societies. Many minimalists have opined, the Bible had to borrow from these accounts to convey a similar message to the Hebrews. But these depictions of ANE texts are essential not only because it contextualizes the atmosphere in which the biblical authors found themselves, which echoed ANE culture, but it also helps us see the polemic on every occasion. In doing so, the biblical authors showed how God “redeems” broken elements of society and shows His accurate version of events. God used “known” constructs in the OT and now the NT to redeem and reveal new truths to his people. We can extrapolate an excellent example in the Laws of

book of Hebrews, multiple allusions, quotations, and echoes from the OT are found, particularly within the supposed warning passages. Based on this fact, a reader can adduce that the author of Hebrews was familiar with Jewish scriptures. The author showed that "the God who spoke in the quoted text" still spoke in his day, as described in Hebrews 1:1–2. He reminded the Hebrews of the progression of events in their lives, even the Greeks.

As a result, using structural analysis of the book with a rhetorical background as a guide, a new covenantal position emerges, showing the idea of better things. The author unequivocally conveyed the progression plan with a much better covenantal place to the readers.<sup>197</sup> Because of the new covenantal work through Christ, it would stand to logic that the author was not warning them of the old things of the past. He was encouraging them about something new they already had in and through Christ; thus, a policy decision was the goal and what needed to be made by the audience: the exhortation.

In the book of Hebrews, several OT books are alluded to and quoted by the author, and the reader must understand the cultic vocabulary used by analogy.<sup>198</sup> For example, the author of

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Hammurabi 1750 BC from Babylonia, where these laws, which pre-dated the direction of the Bible, or the Torah, and have similar attributes or parallels to those accounts found in the biblical narratives, see Victor H Matthews, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 114–15. We can now see the same happening in the book of Hebrews.

<sup>197</sup> The accomplishment of salvation is best described with the Latin phrase *historia salutis*, a term that speaks of the accomplishment of salvation in history. See Crowe, *The Hope of Israel*, 105, cf. Herman Ridderbos, "The Redemptive-Historical Character of Paul's Preaching," in *When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 48–49, which was noted by Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "By Faith, Not by Sight:" *Paul and the Order of Salvation* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 18–19; cf. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1979), 22–26. We must remember that *historia salutis* gives particular attention to the unique event in the history of redemption for the people of God, and the event has to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is a new event altogether for the people of God. See Kevin L. Anderson, "But God Raised Him from the Dead:" *The Theology of Jesus' Resurrection in Luke-Acts*, PBM (repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 5–10, 4–47, cf. François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-Five Years of Research (1950-2005)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 1–85.

<sup>198</sup> This is the process described by scholars as *analogia entis* which explains the relationship between the Old and New Covenants systems of worshiping God. See Norman L. Geisler, "Analogy: The Only Answer to the Problem of Religious Language," *JETS* 16 (Summer 1973): 167; Lewis S. Ford, "Tillich and Thomas: The Analogy of Being," *JR* 46 (April 1966): 244. Perhaps the problem in past interpretation has been between the classical

Hebrews brings a significant theological explanation of the book of Exodus in Hebrews, and it can show in his attitude towards the OT in light of the events of Christ or the ontological studies of revelation, which happens to be a theophany.<sup>199</sup> The author of Hebrews was so familiar with the OT passages that it is evident that he had a particular esteem for the Hebrew Scriptures. He used them frequently, not as a repeat of the punishments once inflicted upon the people of God resulting from violating the covenant, but as a rhetorical deliberative argument used to dissuade and encourage a policy change. Still, the reader must notice that the difference in the application of both canons is where scholarship has differed because it has not been examined adequately within its rhetorical application.<sup>200</sup>

### The Use of OT Passages in the NT

The OT appears to use warnings and exhortations to keep the people of God in line with

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*analogia entis* and the temporal *analogia entis* as it relates to philosophical traditions. See Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, AUSDDS, vol. 10 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987). 362.

<sup>199</sup> The author of Hebrews theology shows that there is no difference between God's Being and His appearance because the two belong together. The author showed that in the OT, God did not become the form through which He manifested His spatiotemporal presence in the world. Moreover, if theophanies can only happen as they did in the OT, it follows that the Incarnation is a theophany, by all intended purposes, since Jesus Christ did not identify with the external form through which He manifested His divinity. It must be that the author of the book of Hebrews understood the Incarnation as a new form of theophany in which God identifies Himself forever with the form that reveals His being and presence. In sum, the Incarnation redefines and deepens our understanding of theophany, the showing of God via the divine accommodation of His Being within the limitations of His creation. This perspective allows Bible scholars to understand that divine life can experience a new thing in the future-present-past flux of time whereas divine reality (ontology) remains unchanged.

<sup>200</sup> An interesting fact is that the author identifies the source of the OT citations as God (Heb 1; 4:3; 7:21; 8:5, 8; 10:30), the Holy Spirit (Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:15), and Christ (Heb 2:12; 5:5–6; 10:5). E. Grasser, "Der Hebraerbrief 1938–1963," *TRu* 36 (October 1964): 206–7. Also, the author presupposes in his argument that the religion of Israel is the only pre-Christian religion, this is a policy decision. Heinrich Zimmermann, *Die Hohepriester-Christologie des Hebraerbriefes: Vortrag beim Antritt des Rektorats und zur Eröffnung des Studienjahres 1963/64 der Philosophisch-Theologischen Akademie zu Paderborn, gehalten am 22. Oktober 1963* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1964), 24; Hughes Graham, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics: The Epistle to the Hebrews as a New Testament Example of Biblical Interpretation*, SNTSMS, ed. R. McL. Wilson and M. E. Thrall, vol. 36 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 70.

what the Word of God says.<sup>201</sup> The reader must also understand that the NT writers used hortatory appeals to convey God's message. Still, the NT showed a completed message through Christ; as a result, a question emerges: were the NT writers using the same covenant formulary as the OT writers did to convey the covenants of God? In this chapter, an identification of typological subjects demonstrates that the author of Hebrews was giving them exhortations based on what emerged in the covenants to believers.<sup>202</sup>

In other words, the author of Hebrews encouraged them to continue in faith and persevere. He did this by using historical data from the OT to have a new covenantal position, not as the OT prophets did with the covenant formulary. The new covenantal work suggests that the author primarily encouraged the readers to persist in their faith instead of warning them of impending judgment. Not in the old way the covenant formulary showed the blessings and curses subject to performance, but by using deliberative rhetoric as discussed before.

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<sup>201</sup> The prophets in the OT used persuasive or perlocutionary language, which were described as actions of convincing, intimidating, astonishing or reassuring. See Walter Huston, "Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament," *The Place Is Too Small for Us: Israel Prophets in Recent Scholarship*, Robert Gordon ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 133–53. The persuasive process is analyzed as these prophets communicated their message to change the hearts of those who heard the message. See Gary V. Smith, *An Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets: The Prophets as Preachers* (Nashville: TN, B&H, 1994), 5–46. The prophets were preaching a message that would internalize God's perspective so that their thinking and behavior would be changed. We can see how Jeremiah was told to write everything that God said so that when the people of Israel would hear about the plan for disaster that God was intending on them, they would turn from their wicked ways as in Jeremiah 36:3. Ezekiel on the other hand, was sent as a watchman to warn the rebellious and stubborn Israel, so that they could turn away from all of their offenses as in Ezek 18:12–13. See Gary V. Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc, 2014), 57.

<sup>202</sup> In relation to the main typology used for the dissertation, both Hebrews 8:5 and 9:24, within the larger frame of Hebrews 8:1–10:18 make a direct move to connect with the OT Exodus 25 and Leviticus 16 as it relates to Jesus' ministry and the works of salvation. The institution of sacrificial offerings and priestly service brings the typological schema of vertical prefiguration in the person of Jesus. The synonyms ὑπόδειγμα (*hyokdeuigna*) and σκιά (*skia*) or copy and shadow are part of the interpretative service of the *typos* that we find in 8:5. As a result, the high priest has not made a sacrifice relating to the antitype but rather a true original in the person of Jesus as seen in 9:24, the greater and more perfect tent (cf. 9:11). It is interesting to study how to the Hebrews, the relationship of the vertical to horizontal typological thought came about. See David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 682–85; D.L. Baker, "Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament," *SJT* 29:137–57; J. Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL, 1981); Von G. Rad, *Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament: in Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. C. Westermann (Richmond, 1983), 17–39; S.N. Gundry, *Typology as a Means of Interpretation: Past and Present*, *JETS* 12 (1984): 233–40.

The NT is full of echoes from the OT scriptures. Because the book of Hebrews is filled with literary influences from the Old Testament, as indicated by Ellingworth, it is essential to unpack the usage of these Old Testament passages.<sup>203</sup> For example, it appears that the prophets of the Old Testament would use a syllogism, later redefined by the Greek rhetoric called enthymeme, to express their prophetic messages.<sup>204</sup> What's more, it appears that the author quoted thirty-five times directly from the Old Testament and used the Pentateuch (thirteen times), Psalms (fourteen times), the prophets (seven times), and wisdom (one time).<sup>205</sup>

To be more specific concerning the passages alluded to, the same question comes to mind: did the NT writers use the same covenant formulary as they used the OT *vis à vis* intertextuality?<sup>206</sup> Or was the author of Hebrews making both dissuasive and exhortative arguments? He is undoubtedly announcing exhortations to the people of God through this Epistle. The only solution to the tension appears in these passages through the rhetorical lenses

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<sup>203</sup> There is an extensive explanation of inter-biblical exposition in the book of Hebrews see Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 37–49; For other usages of echoes in scriptures see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2016), 44; Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

<sup>204</sup> An enthymeme is an argument in which one of the premises is not explicitly stated. See Lundbom, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 33–24, where he covers the message of the prophets and the covenant disobedience (cf. M. Gilula, “An Egyptian Parallel to Jeremiah I 4–5,” VT 17 (1967):114, but the author of Hebrews makes a clear distinction of better things in Christ.

<sup>205</sup> The author of Hebrews gives no indication of having used any aspects of the Torah, Ruth, Esther, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (cf. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 38). There is an essential distinction between the Pentateuch and the Torah as it relates to mentioning specifically from any of the aspects of the law covered by the Torah, and not the use of the Pentateuch as it is relatable or attributed to the Torah in Hebrew writings and Judaism.

<sup>206</sup> The used of intertextuality is interchangeable according to currents of biblical literature, see Nicholas List, “Δίπλωμα: Moving Beyond Intertextuality,” *New Testament Studies* 67, no. 1 (2021): 85–104; Blaire A. French, “Chronicles and Intertextuality in Early Rabbinic Literature,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43, no. 4 (2019): 712–725; Khaled Anatolios, ““Christ the Power and Wisdom of God”: Biblical Exegesis and Polemical Intertextuality in Athanasius’s Orations Against the Arians,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 4 (2013): 503–535.

of deliberative rhetoric. In doing so, he addressed a Jewish audience needing ethical reminders and a Greek one needing practical exhortation.

## The Preservation

The Scriptures preserved The Word of God.<sup>207</sup> In essence, scriptures are the revealed and preserved Words of God. In the Bible, a particular group of remarkable people called *Israelites* appears, as indicated in Exodus 35:29.<sup>208</sup> These were also known as the Sons of Israel. They were unique to God because the Israelites were "all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring material for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD (Ex 35:29."

God calls Abraham, and he sets out on an unknown journey. Abraham leaves behind his birthplace and home to travel through the unfamiliar Mesopotamian territory. He eventually moves on to the land God shows him, and the biblical stories of his life preserve that hard-earned knowledge. As Israel is studied, the reader must recognize two simple concepts to help answer the postulated question about the Israelites: *inscripturation* and *fixation*.<sup>209</sup> God spoke God's

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<sup>207</sup> For centuries, scholars have recognized that God is one who speaks. See Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver, B.C: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 15–24; John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 34; William Temple, *Nature, Man and God* (London: Macmillan, 1934), 322; Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 63; Hugo Meynell, *God and the World* (London: SPCK, 1971), 20; Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Eng. Trans. London: Lutterworth, 1949), 69; H. D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 76.

<sup>208</sup> The Israelites were described in detail by Antony Kamm and Inc NetLibrary, *The Israelites: An Introduction* (London; New York. Routledge, 2002), 55; Adriane Leveen, *Biblical Narratives of Israelites and their Neighbors: Strangers at the Gate*, 1st ed., vol. 3. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1–24; Shawn W. Flynn, *A Story of YHWH: Cultural Translation and Subversive Reception in Israelite History*. 1st ed. (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY. Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2019); 3–52; Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Henri Daniel-Rops, *Israel and the Ancient World: A History of the Israelites from the Time of Abraham to the Birth of Christ*, [First English]. ed. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949).

<sup>209</sup> Inscripturation is the idea that the preservation of Words, inscripturation, describes a method that was either immediately or eventually employed to preserve those words for future generations by the Israelites, while fixed or settled at a particular time for the future by fixation. See Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, n. d.1977), 15; Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand

revelation. God gave this revelation to this group of people God had selected from a promise given to Abraham many years earlier, as indicated in Genesis 12:2.<sup>210</sup>

The phrase וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה (*VaAdonaiAmar*) "and the Lord said," was recorded, through inscripturation and fixation, two hundred and thirty-two times in the Pentateuch, again showing that the God of the Hebrews speaks, unlike any other god that the people of antiquity were worshipping.<sup>211</sup> The Hebrews studied the scriptures from early in their lives, and this could not be more evident than by the memorization from every Jew of the שְׁמָע (*Shema*), where they pledge their allegiance to the One and Only God. Research has shown that no other nation has done so in history.<sup>212</sup>

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Rapids: Baker, 1977), 104; G.C. Berkour, *Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 195; D. Broughton Knox, *The Everlasting God* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1982).

<sup>210</sup> To read more about the life of Abraham see, Paul R Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, vol. 315 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 35–63; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Abraham: The Story of a Life*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 87; Mark Sheridan and Thomas C. Oden, *Genesis 12-50*, vol. II (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2002), 22–51; Joel S Baden, *The Promise to the Patriarchs*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 36–102; Karl Deenick, *Righteous by Promise: A Biblical Theology of Circumcision*, vol. 45 (Downers Grove, Illinois: Apollos, IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2018), 11–68; F. E. Peters, *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*, New Princeton Classics paperback ed. vol. 34 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>211</sup> The Israelites were not immune to idolatry but unlike other nations, the Hebrews were given direct commands by God not to do so. See G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2020), 141–160; Leivy Smolar and Moshe Aberbach, "The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature, *HUCA* 39 (1968): 103, 105; Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament* (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1972), 98–101; Yisca Zimran, "Micah 5.9–14 (10–15) and Isaiah 2.6–22: Two Distinctive Perceptions of Idolatry," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 3 (2020): 420–436; Barnard C Taylor, "Israel's Greatest Sin: Idolatry," *The Old & New Testament Student* 12, no. 4 (1891): 198–202; Naomi Janowitz, "Good Jews Don't: Historical and Philosophical Constructions of Idolatry," *History of Religions* 47, no. 2 (2007): 239–252; Nava Sebillia Sadeh, "A Secular Holy Land: Pagan Images, Jewish Motifs and National Identity - Reflections on Dorit Feldman's Artwork," *Israel Affairs* 25, no. 1 (2019): 118–148; Mark Johnston, *Saving God: Religion After Idolatry*, Course Book ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2009), 38.

<sup>212</sup> From a historical perspective, the Jews are the only ones that memorize this and recite it every day, twice a day, in the morning and evening. See Leonard Kriegel, "The Shema." *First Things* (New York, N.Y.) (2021): 1–4; Peter Zaas, "Symposium on the Shema," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 48, no. 3 (2018): 133–147; Nathan MacDonald, "The Date of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 4 (2017): 765–782; Leonardo Pessoa da Silva Pinto, "The Shema and the Devotion to Only One Deity," *Horizonte (Belo Horizonte, Brazil)* 17, no. 52 (2019): 20–42; Judah Kraut, "Deciphering the Shema: Staircase Parallelism and the Syntax of Deuteronomy 6:4," *Vetus Testamentum* 61, no. 4 (2011): 582–602.

To the Jews in both canons, God showed His power on Mount Sinai as He spoke (literally). The author of Hebrews uses typology in Hebrews 12:18-24, where he made the point that the same God who spoke to their ancestors was still talking to them and us about His plan of salvation, but he used Jewish rhetoric to convey the message. This extraordinary experience requires faith. But, unless a reader can distinguish from the time that Jesus changed everything until His return, there would be no way to identify those who would belong to a new faith based on better things. The author revealed this truth to both Jews and Greeks.

### **The Combined Audience**

The author of Hebrews presented the idea of better things using Hebrew and Greek rhetoric to both Greek and Hebrew audiences. If not shown this way, there would be no room to argue a new covenantal position or even the inclusion of Greeks into the family of God because there would be no distinction between the old and the new. He did it by using deliberative rhetoric to dissuade the Jewish and Jewish rhetoric of morality. He also did this by using deliberative rhetoric to appeal to the Greeks practically. The author of Hebrews ensured the continuation of God's original plan of redemption as it relates to the people of the covenant, now known as the NCP; this includes all those currently in the community of faith. If the author of Hebrews had been unfamiliar with scriptures that indicated that perhaps a union of sorts would happen among the people of God, he would have just used Jewish rhetoric to convey his biblical message. Still, he did not just use Jewish rhetoric.

The goal, then, is to show that the NCP is evident as the Epistle's author conveys the idea of better things multiple times throughout the book, not in a manner that could be repudiated, but as a final and quintessential episode of the history of redemption for the people of God. By comparing the OT with the NT promises, within the patron-client relations, which appeared to be

superior by design, the author finally conveyed to them the assurance in Christ alone. This assurance was not as the means of salvation that God uses to keep His people from apostasy when they would be facing such persecution through the times until Christ's second coming, but as in a new position. This position included both Jews and Gentiles now as the people of God.<sup>213</sup>

## The Reconciliation

The fact that the blood of Christ brings about complete reconciliation with God and salvation from His vengeance is the main reason the NCP is how God brings a better way. People "now" belonging to the new covenant are not those who did belong to it in the past, known as the OT covenant formulary. Now renewed in Christ for infinity, but not with the same harmful implications that the old covenant formulary had for the people of God in antiquity. This one is for an unlimited time (cf. Hebrews 7:25). How is that possible?

Perhaps a problem can emerge by exposition and the socio-linguistic methodology. Within the hopeless situation, as witnessed by the blood of Abel, the new covenant leading to the reconciliatory sacrifice of Christ by his blood was a completely new outcome with a further consequence for those who were now part of it. Although it is difficult for humans to see, God already knew of developing His great plan of redemption for His people. The Hebrew word for

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<sup>213</sup> For an explanation of the different views of means of salvation see, Peter Frick, "The Means and Mode of Salvation: A Hermeneutical Proposal for Clarifying Pauline Soteriology," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 29, no. 2 (2007): 203–222; Joseph Bottum, "There are those among Us Who Debate the Means of Attaining Eternal Salvation, but for at Least One Creature in Nature, Settling for a Finite Earthly Existence Just Doesn't Suffice," *First Things* (New York, N.Y.) no. 204 (2010): 82; T. Vail. Palmer, *Grace and Faith: The Means to Salvation*, vol. 65, Friends Historical Association, 1976; Joseph Webster, "Praying for Salvation: A Map of Relatedness," *Religion* (London, 1971) 47, no. 1 (2017): 19–34; Lukasz Bergel, "God's Victory and Salvation. A Soteriological Approach to the Subject in Apocalyptic Literature," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 3 (2019): 1–6; John Bremner, "Salvation History Means Today." *Worship* 39, no. 8 (1965): 488. Some have even suggested that the way in which we view salvation is directly related on where we find ourselves in the spectrum of psychosocial needs, see Timm, Jasmine, Holly Block, Georgeta Boanca, and Hannah E. Acquaye, "An Exploratory Study on the Relationship between Completion of Erikson's Fourth Psychosocial Stage and Assurance of Salvation," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 24, no. 1 (2022;2020): 53–73.

salvation is *יְשׁוּעָה* (*Yeshua*), and the author was making sure that the people of God knew that this salvation was by God through human agency.<sup>214</sup> So much so that the concept of salvation *σωτηρία* (*Soteria*) is described by the author of Hebrews seven times in seven different verses, as shown in Hebrews 1:14; 2:3; 1:10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; and 11:7.

## The Consequence

This salvation can appear as explained by the author of Hebrews within the abundant usage of OT references. The living God (Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22). God's living and active word (Heb 4:12). The new and living way Jesus opened through his death (Heb 10:20). The command to submit to the Father of spirits and live (Heb 12:9). All indicate that the perfect plan of salvation or life, is now briefly described for the people of God within this new covenant or what has been called the NCP; something better.

On the one hand, the prophetic model, by which salvation emerged within history through human instruments, appeared within the book of the prophet Isaiah using covenant formulary. On the other hand, in the liturgical model, the divine presence was safeguarded by sacrifices found in Leviticus's book.<sup>215</sup> Now, the letter to the Hebrews addresses both models respectively but is more comprehensively related to the people of the covenant as the author used

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<sup>214</sup> This agency concept can be seen in Benjamin J Ribbens, "The Sacrifice God Desired: Psalm 40:6–8 in Hebrews 10," *New Testament Studies* 67, no. 2 (2021): 284–304; Joshua W Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14," *New Testament Studies* 56, no. 4 (2010): 557–575; Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'new Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; "Between Text and Sermon: Hebrews 1:1–4," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 57, no. 3 (2003): 291; Madison N. Pierce, "So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 4 (2020): 893–895; Albert J Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1–2a," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1–8; Chad Thornhill, "Paul & Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation, Preston M. Sprinkle: Book Review," *Neotestamentica* 47, no. 2 (2013): 414–418; Kenneth Grayston, "Salvation Proclaimed III. Hebrews 9:11–14," *Expository Times* 93, no. 6 (1982): 164–168.

<sup>215</sup> Mary Douglas, "The Eucharist: Its Continuity with the Bread Sacrifice of Leviticus," *Modern Theology* 15, no. 2 (1999): 209–224.

Jewish and Greek rhetoric simultaneously, addressing those who belong to it. This model covered both ethical and practical needs for human comprehension.

In essence, the author of Hebrews addresses the issue of salvation by guiding and encouraging his addressees to come to a final understanding and appropriate application of their confessed faith in Christ. The same was initiated and perfected by Christ, as the author uses the exhortation passages as reminders of what God has accomplished for them. In other words, the author of Hebrews was making sure that the people of the covenant knew that because of Christ, they had a better chance at salvation. This salvation is because of the now better things that their ancestors never had, even though salvation was accomplished in the same way, by faith *πίστει pisteis*, as indicated in Hebrews 10:38. This is the essence of the better things, something new.

Twenty times, the author of Hebrews urged his audience of the different manifestations of people that by faith, God accomplished beautiful things through them, as seen in Hebrews 4:2; 10:38; 11:3; 11:4; 11:5; 11:7; 11:8; 11:9; 11:11; 11:17; 11:20; 11:21; 11:22; 11:23; 11:24; 11:27; 11:28; 11:29; 11:30; 11:31; and, 11:33. Because of faith, and as a witness through inscripturation and fixation, an intricate and stitching way of the divine rescue plan that God had for His people had emerged. According to the author of Hebrews, this was a better salvation (Hebrews 6:9) and was the main homiletical message of the Epistle, one of better things.

Although this plan of salvation is available to all, only those in the NCP can enjoy its full benefits. Put another way, for those who obey Him, Christ became the source of eternal life or salvation, as indicated in Hebrews 5:9.<sup>216</sup> Not to say that God does not desire everyone to be

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<sup>216</sup> Although the plan of eternal salvation is described in the book of Hebrews, there are many scholars who still differ in how this salvation is accomplished. See, José Adriano Filho, "The Paths of Salvation and Eternal Condemnation: The Presence of the Allegory in the History of the Elected Pilgrim and His Brother Precito (1682), De Alexandre De Gusmão," *Horizonte (Belo Horizonte, Brazil)* 13, no. 37 (2015): 525–541; Joseph Bottum, "There are those among Us Who Debate the Means of Attaining Eternal Salvation, but for at Least One Creature in Nature, settling for a Finite Earthly Existence Just Doesn't Suffice," *First Things (New York, N.Y.)* no. 204 (2010): 82; Matthew McAfee, "Kept for Jesus: What the NT really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal

saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, as shown in 1 Timothy 2:3–4. Still, many will wait for His plan of salvation, as Jacob suggested in Genesis 49:18 and Moses proclaimed in Exodus 14:13, while others may twist and turn the truth to fit their agenda.<sup>217</sup> There has been no change in human response to those outside the NCP. The author of Hebrews expressed this truth in his Epistle to both communities simultaneously.

The reader cannot deny that heresies were, and continue to be, a legitimate concern for the people of the NCP and today's church. Almost every author in the NT called them false teachers concerning those who would attempt to confuse, even the elect. The researcher won't call them false teachers, but it must discuss how it is possible to come up with many different interpretations of the same scriptures regarding salvation. As a result, it must conclude how God redeems His people in the book of Hebrews as He has revealed the position in the NCP.<sup>218</sup>

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Security," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 4 (2015): 858; Eric Reitan, "Eternal Damnation and Blessed Ignorance: Is the Damnation of some Incompatible with the Salvation of Any?" *Religious Studies* 38, no. 4 (2002): 429–450; Scott Swain and Michael Allen, "The Obedience of the Eternal Son," *International Journal of Systematic Theology: IJST* 15, no. 2 (2013): 114–134; "A Sermon and the Scriptural Method of BELIEVING in Order to Obtain Present and Eternal SALVATION," *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 22, (1799): 8–14; Olli-Pekka Vainio, "On Faith, Merit, and Eternal Life" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 56, no. 1 (2017): 84–90; Rollin S. Armour, "Salvation and the Perfect Society: The Eternal Quest," by Alfred Braunthal, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1979, *Church History* 50, no. 4 (1981): 469–470; Gerald O'Collins, "The Faith of 'Others': A Biblical Possibility," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2015): 313–326; Godwin A Etukumana, "How does One Interpret the Synoptic Gospels' Warning Passages while Affirming the Irrevocable Nature of Salvation?" *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 74, no. 3 (2018): 1–7; Abiola Mbamalu, "Jesus the Interceding High Priest: A Fresh Look at Hebrews 7:25," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1–6.

<sup>217</sup> Specifically speaking, twisting and turning the truth comes in the area of soteriology more than any other categories as see by on the one hand, Richard Harries, "Universal Salvation," *Theology (Norwich)* 123, no. 1 (2020): 3–15; Steven Nemes, "Praying Confidently for the Salvation of All," *Heythrop Journal* 61, no. 2 (2020): 285–296; Shao Kai Tseng, "Condemnation and Universal Salvation: Karl Barth's 'reverent Agnosticism' Revisited," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 71, no. 3 (2018): 324–338; on the other hand, Alasdair Heron, "The Great Debate, Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation by Alan P. F. Sell. Worthing, H. E. Walter, 1982 " *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39, no. 1 (1986): 140–141; Michael Scott Horton and J. Matthew Pinson, *Four Views on Eternal Security* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002); Bishop of Dioklei Kallistos, *How are we Saved? The Understanding of Salvation in the Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Light & Life Pub, 1996).

<sup>218</sup> Many people confuse the obedience to God with a way of salvation or salvation by works, see Ribbens, 284–304; Iulian Faraoanu, "Abraham's Faith in and Obedience to God," *Romanian Journal of Artistic Creativity* 6, no. 1 (2018): 49–58; Richard J Clifford, "What the Biblical Scribes Teach Us about their Writings," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 79, no. 3 (2018): 653–667; Scott D. Mackie, "Confession of the Son of God in Hebrews," *New Testament Studies* 53, no. 1 (2007): 114–129; Timothy Bertolet, "Hebrews 5:7 as the Cry of the Davidic Sufferer," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 51, no. 1 (2017): 1–10.

## POSITION

As an old community, the Jewish people have assimilated several concepts: covenants, idolatry, prophets, priests, kings, and warnings. Other ideas, however, were not as familiar to all of them: faith, salvation, faithfulness, and perseverance, just to mention a few. As a result, the author of Hebrews takes time to explain some of these to show a new position that requires a new direction. The reason is two folds: first, Christ had come; second, more people belong to this new community. The goal then was unity! They have not united in the past, so the author of Hebrews gave these exhortations to connect everyone. They needed to go—in the direction—of a New Christian Community! But they had been formed by previous covenants.

### The Revelation of the NCP

It appears that neither the Hebrew word for warning *עִד* (*ûd*) nor the Greek word *νουθεσία* (*nouthesia*) appears in the Book of Hebrews. This fact could have been the first indication to scholars of the unnecessary use of the warning passage. Or as means for anyone to change their status concerning their position in a futuristic way. However, that has never dissuaded anyone from including terms, nor should it prevent anyone from forming them properly using systematic studies.<sup>219</sup> There is a need to be careful to generalize ideas or concepts simply because a scholar or a theologian wants to emerge in the discussion.<sup>220</sup> The reader should

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<sup>219</sup> An example of terms not found in scriptures but surely taught in scriptures is the Trinity. Similarly, to the account that I am explaining in the book of Hebrews, the Trinity can be traced in both canons. The intention is not to cover the current discussions about the economic submission of the Son to the Father or their relationship within this dissertation. See Michal F. Bird and Robert Shillaker, “Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles: A Response to Recent Discussions,” *Trinity Journal* 29 (2008): 267–83; Michael Bird, and Robert Shillaker, “The Son Really, Really is the Son: A Response to Kevin Giles,” *Trinity Journal* 30 (2009): 257–68.

<sup>220</sup> Examples of some discussions are presented in the arguments between losing salvation and not, which can be found as early as the 16th century with the arguments between Calvinist and Armenians. See the following cited commentaries: J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, trans. and ed. J. Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. of 1909 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970); J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ICC Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1924); H. Windisch, *Der Hebräerbrief* (HNT 14; 2d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck],

confirm this new concept of NCP because other scholars have failed to see this perspective. As a result, caution should exist before a phrase is coined.

In the case of the book of Hebrews, the author was dissuading them. Although not implicitly, with his rhetoric, to a life free from condemnation by a new covenantal position *in* Christ, which has been described to them through exhortation as a new Christological way. Based on the elegance of the classical Greek employed in the book of Hebrews, the author should have included the phrase warning, or more importantly, warning against the peril of losing something obtained through Christ, if that was, in fact, his intended purpose. Still, the Epistle lacks such assertiveness, but the author utilizes plenty of dissuasion, which does not equate to losing anything. Dissuasion is a tool used to express ethical messages.

The fact that the author used historical empirical evidence to guide his arguments does not necessarily mean that the author intended to bring them fear (accusation of blame) about the possibility of losing something. Instead, he showed an appeal to the problematic situation of the persecution they were facing. As a result, the warning could not appear to prevent an inherent apostasy ἀποστασία (*apostasia*), appearing only in its inflected form ἀποστρέφω (*apostrepho*). But as an encouragement to persevere in the faith. This encouragement has been the central message of the Epistle to the Saints all along in its homiletical understanding.<sup>221</sup>

Inevitably, the author conveyed a superior covenant and, as a result, a special relationship with God, which is the genesis for this idea of an NCP. The Epistle presents Christ

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1931); C. Spicq, *UÉpitre aux Hébreux* (2 vols., Ebib; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1952-53); O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, KEKNT 13, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975); P. E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); D. Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). This is just for perusal, as this is not a theological dissertation but a socio-linguistical one using exposition.

<sup>221</sup> Different translations have been attributed, see David A DeSilva, "Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Client Relationships," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 1 (1996): 91–116.

as God's final revelation to the forefathers through the prophets. Since the author used over one hundred combined allusions, quotations, references, topics, and summaries from the OT, his rhetorical deliberative approach shows the unity between canons, and they both testify to the new revelation of God through his Son.<sup>222</sup> This presentation of the NCP applied to them, but only if they could understand it. What better way than to present it to them in a way that would be understood by both cultures, in a rhetorical way using ethical and practical applications?

The reader can adduce that perhaps God wanted His people to see His revelation given to the author of Hebrew in this NCP, which is the idea of better things or a personification in full effect. But why should people be encouraged rather than warned using deliberative rhetoric? There was a need for exhortation as God's people faced prosecution in the first century like never before. The Jewish people needed to take heed of Jewish rhetoric. At the same time, the Greeks used classical rhetoric to convey to them that they needed to abstain from sinful practices, avoid evildoers, and they were going to face persecution. This approach covers ethical and practical ways to communicate the new message of the NCP. It is quite possible; in fact, it appears that the author of Hebrews was presenting, rhetorically, a new revelation for the people of God, one which has been called the NCP. Do the OT references support this assumption? To answer this,

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<sup>222</sup> Several scholars have attempted to pinpoint the number of quotations, allusions, and the like in the book of Hebrews from the OT. See G. H. Guthrie, "Old Testament in Hebrews," *DLNT*, eds. Ralph P. Martin & Peter If Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 841–50; David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 3; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 29–34; George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews in Its First-Century Contexts," *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, eds. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 434–37; G. H. Guthrie, "Old Testament in Hebrews," *DLNT*, eds. Ralph P. Martin & Peter H. David (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 841–50; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews. A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 48–50; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 104; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary, 47A (Dallas: Word, 1991), cxxxvii–cxxxviii; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. Vancouver (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 140–41, 151–55; Thomas G. Long, *Hebrews: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 22; Andrew I.T. Trotter, Jr. *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Guides to the New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 202.

examining the echoes, allusions, and quotations found in the book of Hebrews is necessary to see if exhortations can substantiate this assertion.

### **The Exhortation Passages in Context**

Beale's interpretative approach describes eight other steps. They will be addressed simultaneously for reasons of concision related to each "warning" passage. In other words, the researcher talked about step one as it applied to each warning passage; now, it will speak about each exhortation passage considering the remaining eight steps.<sup>223</sup> Although, at first, it appears that the research would require an exposition of all the passages, it would be only as peruse of the steps described by Beale's approach. The approach is to identify any distinction between a warning or an appeal within the passages. Not as a warning form of losing something but as an appeal for hope in a new covenant. Christ has brought the better things concept within the Epistle. And with this foreknowledge, the author used deliberative rhetoric to accomplish his persuasion.

Accordingly, the overall context when using the approach mentioned above of the first exhortation passage indicates that the first allusion used in the OT was about the conquest of Canaan, a reminder to "hear" the voice of the angel, or the angel of the covenant in Isaiah 63:9; Malachi 3:1—the second person of the Trinity.<sup>224</sup> The context of the NT indicates that a critical

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<sup>223</sup> The eight remaining steps in sequence are: 1) analyze the broad NT context where the OT reference occurs, 2) analyze the OT context both broadly and immediately, especially thoroughly interpreting the paragraph in which the quotation or allusion occurs, 3) survey the use of the OT text in early and late Judaism that might be of relevance to the NT appropriation of the OT text, 4) compare the texts (including their textual variants), 5) analyze the author textual use of the OT, 6) analyze the author's imperative use of the OT, 7) analyze the author's theological use of the OT, and 8) analyze the authors' rhetorical use of the OT.

<sup>224</sup> Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, *Genesis-Leviticus*, revised, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 505. This is the pre-incarnated Christ and is not to be confused with the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 where Jesus was going to confirm the fulfillment of the same in the person of John the Baptist, as seen in Matthew 11:7–10.

word used *περισσότερως* (*perissoteroce*) "in a greater degree" was applied. This word was a reminder of the actual historical nature of the OT events and not an indication of punishment or judgment to happen when the author encourages them to pay much closer attention. In other words, the author was not warning them of the possibility of losing anything they had but instead showing the better covenant in Christ and the conquest of life that they now enjoyed. The author did this only using deliberative rhetoric, not epideictic nor forensic in the homiletical prose.

The NT created a new relationship between God's people and the Bible's God. The Apostle Paul, more than any other NT writer, brought the concept of the phrase "in Christ. Christ's principle can appear in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (but Christ, for Christ, and through Christ, all have a much better relationship than in the past (Heb 3:6, 9:24, 13:21).<sup>225</sup> Without seeing this essential biblical distinction, it would be easy to continue to attribute the message as a warning rather than an appeal. The lack of recognition creates a penumbra of interpretations, as it has with some scholars concerning an incomplete act that requires synergism. This distinction would be congruent with epideictic rhetoric, which has been the reason for misinterpreting a warning rather than an exhortation.

The second exhortation passage's context used in the OT was narrating the relationship between the Lord and His people. The relationship of apathy and disobedience, where this history was associated with *מְרִיבָה* (*meribah*) or contending, and *מַסָּה* (*massah*) testing in places that Israel had acted wantonly against the Lord. This act symbolizes generations of faithless

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<sup>225</sup> The discussion of what it means to have a personal relationship through Christ is further explained by the different camps. See, Benjamin Bennett-Carpenter, "Use of the Phrase 'Personal Relationship with Jesus': Toward a Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Explanation," *Zygon* 52, no. 3 (2017): 663–690; Enda McDonagh, "A Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ," *Furrow* 32, no. 12 (1981): 763–771; Elaina R Mair, "Colin E. Gunton's Christological Anthropology: Humanity's Relationships in the Image of Christ," *Perichoresis (Oradea)* 19, no. 2 (2021): 63–81; A du Toit, "'In Christ,' 'in the Spirit' and Related Prepositional Phrases: Their Relevance for a Discussion on Pauline Mysticism," *Neotestamentica* 34, no. 2 (2000, 2007): 287–298; Markus Bockmuehl, "The Personal Presence of Jesus in the Writings of Paul," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, no. 1 (2017): 39–60.

Israelites (Psalm 78:18, 41, 56) who dared to challenge or test the Lord. But the people of the OT had not yet experienced the new hearts promised to them.<sup>226</sup> As far as it shows, none of the scholars that argue for the possibility of someone losing something has made this distinction, a new heart in Christ. As a result, the potential for losing something is a real dilemma for them. Perhaps because the author did not mention a better heart within the idea of better things; nevertheless, better things are only for the people of God.

In the OT, their hearts, a metaphor for their inner beings, were corrupt, proving that they did not know God's דֶּרֶךְ (*derek*) ways or obtained God's rest.<sup>227</sup> In Hebrews, the author elaborates on his exposition of Psalm 95. He explores the historical background and the contemporary relevance related to rest, which is now a fortified entry of the heavenly rest for the people of God. The author of Hebrews was not warning them of the possibility of losing this new freedom in Christ but instead elaborating on the personal nature of this new relationship in this covenant. There are some, of course, that do not have this relationship. It would be best if they take heed of the exhortations given to them in the Epistle. But as it can appear, the author once again was

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<sup>226</sup> There must be a new meaning to the concept of hardened heart experienced by the people of the OT and the new heart experienced by the new covenant. See Matthew J. Tuininga, "Because of Your Hardness of Heart': Calvin and the Limits of Law," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 69, no. 3 (2016): 281–294; A new creation is formed as contrasted by the OT and NT teachings; see Ben Page, "If Anyone is in Christ – New Creation," *Religious Studies* (2018): 1–17; For a further contrast between OT and NT teachings regarding Jesus' works see Michael W. Andrews, "The Sign of Jonah: Jesus in the Heart of the Earth," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61, no. 1 (2018): 105–119; Teppei Kato, "Hebrews, Apostles, and Christ: Three Authorities of Jerome's *Hebraica Veritas*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 73; 2019, no. 4 (2019): 420–439.

<sup>227</sup> The people of God in the OT were not aware that God offered them eschatological rest in the context of creation and redemption, even though they witnessed with their own eyes. See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Promise Theme, and the Theology of Rest," *BSac* 130 (1973): 135–50; Georg Braulik, "Gottes Ruhe—das Land oder der Tempel? Zu Psalm 95:11," in *Freude an der Weisung de Herrn* eds. Haag and Hossfeld, 33–44; Gábor Ambrus, "The Eschatological Future of the Jews in the 'Vine Diagram' of Joachim of Fiore," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2016): 171–194; Hans Boersma, "Eschatological Justice and the Cross: Violence and Penal Substitution," *Theology Today (Ephrata, Pa.)* 60, no. 2 (2003): 186–199; Ian J Vaillancourt, "Psalm 118 and the Eschatological Son of David," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 4 (2019): 721–738.

trying to have a change of mind for the audience as he used deliberative rhetoric to accomplish a shift in the decision while keeping with Jewish thinking.

The context of the third exhortation passage in the OT is one following a scene in heaven (Psalm 2:4-6). This scene leads to the decree of the Lord in (v. 7) that deals with the Davidic king, the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. This decree involves an act of adoption and an expectation of obligation.<sup>228</sup> Also, the Davidic king serves as God's king in the order of Melchizedek, who oversees the responsibility for the true worship of the Lord.<sup>229</sup> This transition shows a complete establishment of a more personal relationship; therefore, the better things concept appears once more within the Epistle.

This relational transition is the context in which the author of Hebrews now shows. The glorious union of the Messiah-Priest and the prophetic vision found in Zechariah 6:13. The author applies this prophecy by allusion to Jesus as both a Priest and King who is building a temple, not of human origin. It was still divine, but the Greeks perhaps were unfamiliar with this most basic teaching that the author was applying right before their eyes with this exhortation passage in his homiletics. Rhetoric would accomplish this message for them.

He is, again, using historical data to show that the former things of the people of Israel no longer apply. Because of what Christ has done, which was a superior covenant now, through faith, they can stay in a covenantal position without fearing losing the blessings as in the

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<sup>228</sup> Kingdom theology and the fulfillment through Christ can be seen in G.H. Jones "The Decree of Yahweh Ps II, 7," *BT* 15 (1965), 344; F. Charles Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971), 121–35; Yigal Levin, "Jesus, 'Son of God' and 'Son of David': The 'Adoption' of Jesus into the Davidic Line." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 4 (2006): 415–442; C. Clifton Black, "Whose Kingdom? Whose Power? Whose Glory?" *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 36, no. 1 (2014): 1–20.

<sup>229</sup> The irrevocable oath that the Lord had promised David and his dynasty had allowed David to show a deep concern for His Lord's dwelling place and with the divine appointment of Jerusalem as the focal point of earthly rule. See M.J. Paul, "The Order of Melchizedek Ps 110:4 and Heb 7:3," *WTJ* 49 (1987), 195–211. The Davidic king is after the order of Melchizedek only in so far as the sacerdotal kingship is concerned.

covenant formulary of the OT. The old has now passed by a covenant that is better than the ones before. Contextually, it would be applicable that the author of Hebrews was again using his rhetorical mastery to present the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus Christ. At the same time, giving them an appeal by using the deliberative rhetorical nature of his narrative. He was considering both Jewish traditions and Greek needs.

The penultimate exhortation passage (OT context) comes first from applying Isaiah 26:20. This shows how, even during exile, the people of God are to be encouraged by the assurance that the judgment will end in God's good time. Applying the close view of history for the people of God as expressed by the prophet and determined by God allows humans to glimpse this future as the basis for faith and hope.<sup>230</sup> It is imperative to notice this encounter's historical nature and not imply perpetual meaning to phrases not included in the original language.

In the NT, the author of Hebrews contextually conveys that a believer must lay hold of the future God has revealed. They now wait for it with eager faith and hope, which surpasses all the apparent obstacles to its realization (Heb 6:11–12, 18–19; 10:32–11:1; 12:1–29). The author was not conveying the possibility of losing something. Rather the deliverance, once and for all, that this New Covenant accomplishes. He compared the OT with the better things now available for the people of the NCP. He was not emphasizing or reinforcing their previous position, nor presenting a defense or judgment to them, but simply wanted a different policy decision from them.

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<sup>230</sup> The author of Hebrews, as other NT writers was pointing explicitly to the correspondence between Israel in the OT scriptures and the NT story of Jesus because they perhaps had failed to grasp or discern the significance of these OT passages. See Martin Luther, "Preface to the Old Testament," in vol. 35 of *Luther's Works* (ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 235–36. Other NT writers will put it in this way, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given to you," as indicated in Mark 4:24–25.

The last exhortation passage context in the OT reference to Haggai 2:6 is that He will do again what God has done in the past, just in a little while, where an eschatological implication emerges when God in His sovereignty is the one who initiates.<sup>231</sup> Despite any display of material splendor, true glory is found in Yahweh alone for the people of God. The NT context does not imply that God will do the *same things* as in the past, but rather, it shows God's sovereignty in what is to happen to His people now. Inevitably, the author conveys that considering the ultimate catastrophe that shows, the people of God should find security in the one place that cannot be shaken. This security is the person and the hope found in Christ Jesus. Using rhetoric, the author conveys the simple truths of the better covenant. Now available to the people of the NCP in a deliberative way, not epideictic nor forensic.

As a result, by using the contextual analysis of both testaments, it is safe to assume that the author of Hebrews is referencing the Old Testament texts to support his arguments. The reader's covenant position, because of the work of Christ, is of better things to come and not for the same covenant formulary stance for the people of the OT.<sup>232</sup> The mega themes in the book of

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<sup>231</sup> Within divine history perspective, the salvation of God's people works itself out through a complicated but ever-ongoing process that moves slowly toward God's goals. See Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1996), 123–24.

<sup>232</sup> The intention is to prove that the characters in the book of Hebrews narrative, uniformly function as a witness for the messianic identity of Jesus by asserting a better covenant through Him. The Jewish scriptural passages are compared to shed light on Hebrew's indebtedness for its formation of his Christology. A compelling argument ensues, which informs our understanding, not only of the book of Hebrews itself, but also of Jesus Christ revealed in the book of Hebrews. A similar argument was formulated by S. Michael. See S. Michael Ahn, *The Christological Witness Function of the Old Testament Characters in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2014), 2. It is further my intention to demonstrate the author's new Christological view which leads to exhortation rather than a warning in reference to the covenants. See Nicholas J. Moore, "Jesus as 'The One Who Entered His Rest': The Christological Reading of Hebrews 4.10," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36, no. 4 (2014): 383–400; Albert J. Coetsee "The Book of Hebrews and the Reformed View of Scripture: Hebrews Echoed in Belgic Confession Articles 2–7," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 54, no. 2 (2020): 1–10; Friedrich Gustav Lang, "Observations on the Disposition of Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 2019;61. no. 2 (2019): 176–196. This last one explains the different divisions of the book of Hebrews wherein the author gives two different Christological sections, two hortatory sections and one epistolary section for the purpose of explaining how the author is now calling his readers to better faith than what his ancestors had experienced.

Hebrews cover the apparent dichotomy of Christ's superiority in all aspects of the old covenant. The believer's maturity, faith, and endurance in the new covenant are more substantial. When Jesus initiates and perfects their faith, this faith is unmovable, unshakable, and of better quality than before. The author simply shows the contrasts between the two spectrums in a deliberative rhetorical way, allowing a decision to emerge.

For example, talking about the old covenant, the author of Hebrews reinforces the idea of the New Covenant in Christ. This covenant is far superior to the one the OT people enjoyed (Heb 8:6, 8:13). Thus, addressing any potential dichotomy between them reinforces their continuity with the exaggerated motif in mind. The maturity of a believer *τελειότητα* *teleioteita* not laying a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. This maturity signifies the process believers will go through now in Christ, rather than through their priests, a process that is of better things for them, requiring a policy decision.<sup>233</sup>

Faith and endurance are addressed independently and are somewhat different from the OT. The recipient of this New Covenant enjoys a personal relationship, not one from a distance or through others. Faith is mentioned thirty-one times in the book of Hebrews, and it is this faith *πίστεως* (*pisteos*) that assures the believer *πληροφορίαν* (*pleirophoria*). The author's idea is detailed in the statement, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Heb 11:1)."

Undeniably, the author of Hebrews could not discuss this assurance in an epideictic or forensic way. Only in a deliberative form, he was expecting a policy decision in the future while keeping their Jewish culture front and center amidst the Hellenistic period they were living in.

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<sup>233</sup> Some denominations have gone as far as to use the book of Hebrews for their church polity, see Alan D. Bulley, "Death and Rhetoric in the Hebrews 'Hymn to Faith,'" *Studies in Religion* 25, no. 4 (1996): 409–423.

When these "warning passages" or concepts emerge as Jewish rhetoric only and not deliberative, they may appear to have been used for their moral aspects rather than social well-being. The author juxtaposed both concepts in their homiletical sense rather than a lesson.<sup>234</sup> This blending is the essence of the argument: the author did not just use Jewish rhetoric as the prophets of the OT; instead, he mixed both cultures to obtain a more likely result in his homiletics.

### **The Concept of Salvation in the Book of Hebrews**

Although this is not theological research, it appears that the book of Hebrews explicitly mentions salvation seven different times. Questions emerge if the author referred to a saving that could be lost or salvation to expect. Was the author attempting to convey different approaches to salvation? Other views? Or was he trying to give a more comprehensive understanding of what salvation meant for the people of God? Does saving cover a past, present, and future aspect, or is it a once-in-a-lifetime event? Does the OT show a different type of salvation from the NT? All these and perhaps more must be answered to see the overall intention of the author of Hebrews.<sup>235</sup>

The first mention of salvation comes in Hebrews 1:14. The author first tried to convey a future aspect of salvation by saying, "will inherit," the salvation spoken about. Still, a closer look reveals a nuanced approach. Because of the legal standing, the author's phrase shows a posture of assurance, not suspenseful. The author stated, "those who will inherit salvation," τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν (*tous mellontas kleironomein soterian*). Inheritance has a legal connotation because an inheritance is a practice of passing on private property, titles, debts, entitlements, privileges, rights, and obligations upon the death of an individual. In this case,

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<sup>234</sup> Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 423.

<sup>235</sup> Madison N. Pierce, "So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 4 (2020): 893–895.

salvation (that which is to be inherited) can only be inherited when the grantor (the Testator) of salvation dies. For inheritance laws, in ancient times, as well as during the second temple period, documentary papyri showed that the transfer of property rarely took place during the lifetime of the Testator, and the death of the Testator was a condition *sine qua non* for the efficacy of the testament.<sup>236</sup>

The nuance concept is that in the book of Hebrews, the Testator was Jesus, the condition upon which God granted salvation to those inheriting it. The Letter to the Hebrews develops a distinct concept of Jesus. Both a high priest and a unique sacrifice once and for all. In doing so, the Book of Hebrews remains faithful primarily to the cult traditions of Second Temple Judaism.<sup>237</sup> The sacrifice is not for people to continue performing but for something already done. This sacrifice does not have a restart, as seen in Hebrews 10:12, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." This offering allowed Jesus

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<sup>236</sup> To review the Hebrew inheritance laws, see Kim Kyu Seop, "The Concept of διαθήκη in Hebrews 9:16-17," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 43, no. 2 (2020): 248–265; Joshua W Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14," *New Testament Studies* 56, no. 4 (2010): 557–575; Philip La G du Toit, "Reconsidering 'Law' in Hebrews," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 42, no. 1 (2021): 1–7; Matthew Thiessen, "Hebrews 12:5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel's Discipline," *New Testament Studies* 55, no. 3 (2009): 366–379; Calum Carmichael, "Inheritance in Biblical Sources," *Law and Literature* 20, no. 2 (2008): 229–242; Eryl W. Davies, "Inheritance Rights and the Hebrew Levirate Marriage," *Vetus Testamentum* 31, no. 2 (1981): 138–144; Seth Kissi, and Ernest Van Eck, "Reading Hebrews through Akan Ethnicity and Social Identity," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 1–10; Ekaterina E. Kozlova, "Abraham's Burial (Genesis 25:9): An Idyllic Burial or a Dispute Over Inheritance?" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42, no. 2 (2017): 177–197; Shelly Kreiczer-Levy, "Succession Law in Israel: Individualism and the Family," *Israel Studies Review* 28, no. 2 (2013): 300–313.

<sup>237</sup> The sacrifice of Christ was the *sine qua non* condition to inherit salvation, see Christian A. Eberhart, and Donald Schweitzer, "The Unique Sacrifice of Christ According to Hebrews 9: A Study in Theological Creativity," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 10, no. 1 (2019): 47; Jason N. Yuh, "Abandonment and Absenteeism in the Letter to the Hebrews and Greco-Roman Associations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138, no. 4 (2019): 863–882; Luke Emeka Ugwuaye, "Classical Hebrew Tongue and Old Testament Study," *Researchers World - Journal of Arts Science and Commerce* 6, no. 1 (2015): 113; The language is not of a race that the person must go for, but of a struggle that a person must endure, see Zoe Hollinger, "Rethinking the Translation of τρέχωμεν τὸν . . . ἀγῶνα in Hebrews 12:1 in Light of Ancient Graeco-Roman Literature," *The Bible Translator* 70, no. 1 (2019): 94–111; B. J. Oropeza, "Running in Vain, but Not as an Athlete (Galatians 2:2): The Impact of Habakkuk 2:2-4 on Paul's Apostolic Commission," Pages 139–50 in *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn for His 70th Birthday*. Edited by Oropeza, B. J., Robertson, C. K., Mohrmann, Douglas C. London: T&T Clark International; John A. Lucas, "A History of the Marathon Race 490 BC to 1975," *Journal of Sports History* 3: 120–38.

to become the Testator (or the source) of salvation, as indicated in Hebrews 5:9.<sup>238</sup> The author explicitly states that Jesus has the authority to grant salvation. Those belonging to the NCP will inherit it because the death of the Testator happened once and for all. Not because the recipients can synergize with God to obtain it.

The next mention of salvation is in Hebrews 2:3, where the author says, "How will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord and attested to us by those who heard." This greatness is the progression of the message of salvation or the Theopractic or Christopractic approach.<sup>239</sup> The distinction comes when salvation appears as the act of God in Christ (a Theopractic approach) or by the action of Christ on God's behalf (a Christopractic approach). The need for synergism may come into play if misinterpreted.

The reader must analyze the canons to see whether what happened at the cross was adequate for humanity and the cosmos. Also, to see whether the scope of redemption has changed from the author's perspective of Hebrews. In this passage, the author unequivocally indicated the progress of the message through the Lord. But that does not negate that it is God who initiated this salvation. Christ accomplished this salvation on behalf of God, where the point of initiation happens to be the same in the eyes of the author of Hebrews, as we will see in

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<sup>238</sup> Zondervan New American Standard Bible (NASB) Exhaustive Concordance (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 2000).

<sup>239</sup> The concept of Theopractic or Christopractic explain where salvation comes from, see Arland J. Hultgren, "Salvation: Its Forms and Dynamics in the New Testament," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 45, no. 3 (2006): 215–222; Lynn M Hempel, and John P. Bartkowski, "Scripture, Sin and Salvation: Theological Conservatism Reconsidered," *Social Forces* 86, no. 4 (2008): 1647–1674; Philip La G. Du Toit, "Reconsidering the Salvation of Israel in Luke–Acts," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 43, no. 3 (2021): 343–369; Kelly Declan, "The Resurrection and God's Eschatological Justification: On a Secondary Strand of Karl Barth's Theology of the Resurrection," *International Journal of Systematic Theology: IJST* 23, no. 3 (2021): 370–393. There are other beliefs that other scholars add to the concept of salvation as discussed by S Knecht, "Integrating Spirituality in Decision-Making Processes: The 'Kairos Experiences' in the 'Faith-Based Facilitation' Process of the Salvation Army 1," *Acta Theologica* 41, (2021): 194; Syafa'atun Almirzanah, "Many Ways to God, Many Ways to Salvation (A Conversation on Isaiah 56:1–8 with Islamic Tradition)," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 77, no. 2 (2021): e1–e10; Gerald O'Collins, "Vatican II on 'Other' Ways of Salvation: A Valid Interpretation?" *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2016): 152–170.

Hebrews 2:10.<sup>240</sup> The people of God believed that it was יהוה (*Adonai*) who created all things, as indicated in Genesis 2. The author of Hebrews is recapitulating the duplicate accounts through the Son, who made all things as described in Hebrews 1:1-3. It can therefore appear as a Theopractic or Christopractic approach applied by the author of Hebrews, which makes them the same.

The next verse that mentions salvation comes in Hebrews 2:10, where the author writes, "For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Here, the author is teaching a new concept to the people of the NCP. The author reveals to them that the same God of the OT was acting toward His people. It is still working through His Son, although some scholars have different views.<sup>241</sup>

The most critical aspect is Christ or the Messiah's suffering, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53. Those who follow Him (or those who are saved) must also endure suffering. The gospels revealed this suffering. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny

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<sup>240</sup> There is a canonical progression that we can see in that the people of God were expecting salvation from God, and as Christ incarnate; the NT progression shows that they are one in the same, although some scholars and religions argue fervently, they are not. See Syafa'atun Almirzanah, "Many Ways to God, Many Ways to Salvation (A Conversation on Isaiah 56:1–8 with Islamic Tradition)," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 77, no. 2 (2021): e1–e10. But the point in which the God above and Christ come as one is equally traceable, canonically as indicated by these scholars, Samuel M. Powell, "The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes Von Hofmann," *Theology Today (Ephrata, Pa.)* 62, no. 4 (2006): 576; Theodore Vial, and Matthew L. Becker, "The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes Von Hofmann" (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), *The Journal of Religion* 87, no. 1 (2007): 118–119; John K. Goodrich, "The Word of God has Not Failed: God's Faithfulness and Israel's Salvation in Tobit 14:3-7 and Romans 9–11," *Tyndale Bulletin* (1966) 67, no. 1 (2016): 41–62.

<sup>241</sup> Madison N. Pierce, "So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 4 (2020): 893–895; Benjamin J. Ribbens, "The Sacrifice God Desired: Psalm 40:6–8 in Hebrews 10," *New Testament Studies* 67, no. 2 (2021): 284–304; Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'New Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Hlulani Mdingi, "Who, Being in the Form of God, Did Not Consider it Robbery to be Equal with God: Kenosis of Leadership," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 76, no. 2 (2020): 1–8; K. J. Pali, "Christ as Once for all Sacrifice: A Cultural Reading of Hebrews," *Acta Theologica* 34, no. 1 (2014): 145–172; Albert Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1–2a," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1–8.

himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). Suffering or taking up the cross is imagery that illustrates the ultimate submission by the follower and the heroic efforts needed to accomplish such a task, not that the sacrifice of Christ had to be repeated. In other words, the author of Hebrews indicated that those genuinely saved are not those who are protected by their sacrifice. However, suffering is involved, but those selected by Him are to move up to glory.

Another verse that speaks of salvation is Hebrews 5:9. Here. The author states, "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." The phrase "having been made perfect" τελειωθεὶς (*teleiotheis*) expressed by the author to show that Christ's sacrifice was complete or perfect. He was bringing to the end to render His sacrifice complete, which requires faith or the epistemic account of saving faith connected to Christ alone.<sup>242</sup> As expressed by the author of Hebrews, this salvation is eternal, unlike the salvation their ancestors were expecting, solely based on the works they could perform or the offerings they made. This salvation secured as made perfect. Jesus was in agony with loud crying and tears but obediently suffered so that this salvation could be made perfect in the eyes of the One able to save Him from death. The author expressed this in the previous verses leading to this new concept or the source of salvation.

The next verse is one that many scholars in the "synergism" camp may have missed. In Hebrews 6:9, the author states, "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel

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<sup>242</sup> Some scholars have argued that a specific virtue of faith can secure salvation. See Kent Dunnington, "Justification by Faith," *Religious Studies* 54, no. 4 (2018): 527–547; Andrew R Hay, *Rethinking Salvation by Allegiance Alone*, vol. 75 (London, England: SAGE Publications, 2018); Ben C. Dunson, "Faith in Romans: The Salvation of the Individual or Life in Community?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34, no. 1 (2011): 19–46; Anna Marie Aagaard, "'My Eyes have seen Your Salvation' on Likeness to God and Deification in Patristic Theology," *Religion & Theology* 17, no. 3–4 (2010): 302–328. Some believe that there is something that still needs to be done by them, bringing about the synergy which I do not believe is required to be saved. See Kevin Lewis O'Neill, "LEFT BEHIND: Security, Salvation, and the Subject of Prevention," *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 2 (2013): 204–226.

sure of better things – things that belong to salvation." Here, the author was presenting the dichotomy of the OT "things" and the new ones implemented by the sacrifice of Christ. Not that God has forgotten their genuine work for His sake, but that there are better things because Christ's completed work makes it so.<sup>243</sup> Sacrifices no longer require redundancy, but completeness and acquisition of salvation, expressed in this way for the people of the NCP.<sup>244</sup> This Christology is what the author of Hebrews told throughout his Epistle, and unless he described it in a rhetorical sense, the people of God (both Jews and now Greeks) might not have understood it.<sup>245</sup>

The penultimate verse states, "So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who

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<sup>243</sup> Scholars have presented different aspects of salvation as it relates to the difference between covenants. See R. W. L. Moberly, "Salvation in the Old Testament," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 15, no. 2 (2021): 189–202; John M. Bracke, "Shorter Reviews and Notices -- Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament by Claus Westerman and Translated by Keith Crim," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 47, no. 2 (1993): 193; John Rodgers, "Salvation in the Thirty-Nine Articles," *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 1 (2013): 115–124; John H. Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation in the Old Testament," *Calvin Theological Journal* 13, no. 2 (1978): 133; Geoffrey W. Grogan, "The Experience of Salvation in the Old and New Testaments," *Vox Evangelica* 5, (1967): 4; D. C. Westermann, "Salvation and Healing in the Community: The Old Testament Understanding," *International Review of Mission* 61, no. 241 (1972): 9–19; Gavin D'Costa, *Salvation for all: God's Other Peoples: Gerald O'Collins: New York: Oxford, 2008*, vol. 66, (London, England: SAGE Publications, 2009): 279; Godwin A. Etukumana, "How does One Interpret the Synoptic Gospels' Warning Passages while Affirming the Irrevocable Nature of Salvation?" *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 74, no. 3 (2018): 1–7.

<sup>244</sup> There is a fundamental difference between the old system of sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ. See K. J. Pali, "Christ as Once for all Sacrifice: A Cultural Reading of Hebrews," *Acta Theologica* 34, no. 1 (2014): 145–172; Christopher R. North, "Some Outstanding Old Testament Problems: V. Sacrifice in the Old Testament," *Expository Times* 47, no. 6 (1936): 250–254; Jon L. Berquist, "What does the Lord Require? Old Testament Child Sacrifice and New Testament Christology," *Encounter (Indianapolis)* 55, no. 2 (1994): 107; Walter Harrelson, "Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice. Roland De Vaux," *The Journal of Religion* 45, no. 3 (1965): 253–254; Norman H. Snaith, "Sacrifices in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 7, no. 3 (1957): 308–317; Gray, G. Buchanan, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament. its Theory and Practice," *Estudios Bíblicos* 32, (1973): 408–409; "Sacrifice in Old Testament, in "Shadows of the Good Things to Come," *Orate Fratres* 25, (1950): 524.

<sup>245</sup> The current of biblical research shows a trend on metaphor theories which would apply to the new Christological concept in rhetoric. See Mason D. Lancaster, "Metaphor Research and the Hebrew Bible," *Currents in Biblical Research* 19, no. 3 (2021): 235–285; George H. Guthrie, "Inventing Hebrews: Design and Purpose in Ancient Rhetoric," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 3 (2019): 662–665; Amir Banbaji, "Conflicted Anagoge: The Renewal of Jewish Textuality in Haskalah Rhetoric," *Jewish Social Studies* 26, no. 2 (2021): 126–169; Ron Guzmán, and Michael W. Martin, "Is Hebrews 5:11–6:20 Really a Digression?" *Novum Testamentum* 57, no. 3 (2015): 295–310; Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2002): 103–123.

eagerly await Him (Heb 9:28)." It appears that this verse is where most of the controversy rest. The author of Hebrews points out that Christ appeared once and died once. This death was for judgment on sin, not that Christ would have to die again, as it was custom for the animals in the OT. This distinction must emerge for proper interpretation.

In other words, there will be no need for an additional atonement in His Second Coming, set in the future. Just as each man dies once, Christ only died for sins once. The correlation is that just as men die, Christ has already died and will return only to rule the world, not those who trusted Him. The author expressively states that Christ's next coming will be for "saving" those who have trusted Him. That is, if they had not died already, it meant that Christ's ultimate return, in victory, signals the completion of God's plan to judge sin and save His people. Not that people would obtain salvation only then.<sup>246</sup> If all agreed on this premise, there would be no need to find a compromise to fit each theological end of the respective spectrums. But again, this research is not theological but expositional.

The final verse speaking about salvation is Hebrews 11:7 (NASB). The author states, "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for

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<sup>246</sup> Perhaps the main confusion is based on the failure to see the different aspects of salvation. See Colin Gunton, "Aspects of Salvation: Some Unscholastic Themes from Calvin's Institutes," *International Journal of Systematic Theology: IJST* 1, no. 3 (1999): 253–265; John D. Searle, "23rd March: Third in Lent Three Aspects of Salvation," *Expository Times* 114, no. 5 (2003): 170–172; Roland Chia, "Salvation as Justification and Deification," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64, no. 2 (2011): 125–139; Denis Moreau, "Clarifying the Concept of Salvation: A Philosophical Approach to the Power of Faith in Christ's Resurrection," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, no. 2 (2011): 387–407; Shao Kai Tseng, "Condemnation and Universal Salvation: Karl Barth's 'reverent Agnosticism' Revisited," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 71, no. 3 (2018): 324–338; Chris L. De Wet, "Human Birth and Spiritual Rebirth in the Theological Thought of John Chrysostom," *In Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 51, no. 3 (2017): 1–9; Phillip Sigal, "Aspects of Dual Covenant Theology: Salvation," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 5, no. 2 (1983): 1; David Hillman, "Salutation and Salvation in Early Modern Theology," *Renaissance Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2020): 821–865; Ramona Simut "Creation and Salvation in Edward Schillebeeckx, Well-being as More about Jesus' Death Less about Resurrection," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 16, no. 46 (2017): 34–48; Vered Sakal, "Realism, Pluralism, and Salvation: Reading Mordecai Kaplan through John Hick," *The Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy* 23, no. 1 (2015): 60–74; Kevin Lewis O'Neill, "Left behind: Security, Salvation, and the Subject of Prevention," *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 2 (2013): 204; Matthew Kemp, "Most Evident to Us, most Distant from God: The Body as Locus of Salvation in Bonaventure's Breviloquium," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 34, (2018): 53–64.

the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." The author said faith gives us confidence in an unseen or unknown future when we read the progression that started in Hebrews 11:1. This is a total and complete trust in God based on what we know of Him; thus, we act according to His will in obedience. There is a rhetorical aspect to accomplish both dissuasion and persuasion.

This faith is what God commands and is required to please Him, so the author connected them.<sup>247</sup> Any human, including Noah, would have grappled with the unanswered questions postulated by God, which the author attempted to convey by referring to "things not yet seen." Noah had never seen anything like the flood before, and he could see no physical evidence that the flood was imminent. It appears Noah trusted God despite what he could not see. The author of Hebrews presented this historical faith.

In the same way, this salvation given to us must be received by faith since it comes from God. Noah's trust proved the wickedness of those who rejected God, and his obedience saved his family. The same happens when people believe by faith that salvation is secured. This belief by faith was initiated and perfected, with better things, by Christ. The concept of better things is implicit, not explicitly conveyed by the author of Hebrews. Still, it must be a triangulation based on Christ alone, not people or their performance. If everything else that Christ brings is better, why would he then not obtain better salvation for the people of the NCP? The exposition of these passages inevitably yields theological observations.

Finally, the author refers to Noah as an "heir of the righteousness according to faith (Heb 11:7)." The author of Hebrews often tied the concept of an "inheritance" with obedience. Usually

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<sup>247</sup> There is an explanation of the faith in the book of Hebrews, see Gerald Glynn O'Collins SJ, "The Faith of Jesus: Translating Hebrews 12:2a," *Expository Times* 132, no. 9 (2021): 387–393.

meaning the victorious rewards God intends us to obtain by following His will (Hebrews 6:11–12). There is a contrast between Noah's behavior and the actions of the nation of Israel, as described in Hebrews 3:7–15.<sup>248</sup> The author ensured by his writings that the covenant people knew of these distinctions, by using deliberative and Jewish rhetoric, in accomplishing this task. The people of the NCP were to keep their faith in Jesus, the founder and perfecter of their newfound confidence (cf. Hebrews 12:2). This would only make sense if the deliberative rhetoric were the primary genre of his appeal.

### The Concept of Faith in the Book of Hebrews

The concept of faith, or by faith, presented in the book of Hebrews as πίστει (*pistei*), ἐκ πίστεως (*ek pisteos*), διὰ πίστεως (*dia pisteos*), will be examined next; all related to the faith of the people of the NCP compared to the faith of those who heard but did not believe. There is a sharp contrast between these two sets of people (those who have faith and those who do not). In Hebrews, the author illustrates how faith is a diversified reality, including faith as content *fides quae* and commitment *fides qua*.<sup>249</sup> In other words, *fides quae* indicates the doctrinal content that

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<sup>248</sup> The concept of curses or blessings comes to mind. See Shubert Spero, "A People that Shall Dwell Alone": Curse or Blessing?" *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2015): 126–130; Dianne Bergant, "Blessings and Curses (Bible Studies; Includes Related Article: Praying with Scripture)," *America (New York, N.Y.: 1909)* 190, no. 4 (2004): 31–31; Lucas G Freire, "Foreign Relations in the Ancient Near East: Oaths, Curses, Kingship and Prophecy," *Journal for Semitics* 26, no. 2 (2017;2018;): 663–687; Nachman Levine, "The Curse and the Blessing: Narrative Discourse Syntax and Literary Form," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27, no. 2 (2002): 189–199; Matthew McAfee, "The Good Word: Its Non-Covenant and Covenant Significance in the Old Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39, no. 4 (2015): 377–404; Benjamin J Noonan, "The Blessing and the Curse: Trajectories in the Theology of the OT," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 4 (2015): 808.

<sup>249</sup> The author of Hebrews does not discriminate as it relates to showing what faith looks like in the OT. We see this by his mention of different types of people, see Gerald O'Collins, "The Faith of 'Others': A Biblical Possibility," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2015): 313–326; David A. Renwick, "Hebrews 11:29–12:2," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 57, no. 3 (2003): 300–302; D. Hamm, "Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Jesus Factor," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1990): 270–291; Friedrich Gustav Lang "Observations on the Disposition of Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 2019: 61 no. 2 (2019): 176–196. There are some similarities found in the book of Hebrews and some other extra-biblical accounts, see Gert J. Steyn, "The Maccabean Literature and Hebrews: Some Intertextual Observations," *Journal for Semitics* 24, no. 1 (2017): 271–291.

"I believe or that we believe," while *fides qua* means the personal act of faith, the faith with which "I believe or that we believe." This faith, as described in Hebrews chapter eleven, linguistically and culturally, is not only exemplified by Abraham and his descendants. Others before the people of the covenant existed (Abel, Enoch, and Noah) or by an outsider, Rahab, the prostitute.

Unpacking Hebrews chapter eleven shows in detail what pleasing God through faith entails, especially for those in the family of the NCP. In the book of Hebrews, the author speaks of faith twenty-one times, and each time, the author attributes this faith to the fact that someone exemplified it the way God intended it to be by those mentioned in chapter eleven. Chapter eleven covers nineteen twenty-one times this concept of faith appears. Rather than examine the twenty-one verses, the first two verses in the book of Hebrews should be unpacked, which are not covered by the overall encompassing chapter eleven.

First, in Hebrews 4:2, the author of Hebrews was concerned about the rest that God promised to His People. He dispels the idea from false teachers that the people of the NCP may have permanently lost the opportunity to enter the rest of Christ. Contextually, the "rest" at stake is a saved believer's spiritual inheritance. The analogy of Israel's failure to enter Canaan immediately was not a metaphor for salvation or for losing this salvation but for the consequences of faithlessness.<sup>250</sup> In other words, it is the faith that a person could otherwise have

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<sup>250</sup> The NCP was instructed that God's faithfulness has not failed, but it is the human faith that may fail. See John K. Goodrich, "The Word of God has Not Failed: God's Faithfulness and Israel's Salvation in Tobit 14:3–7 and Romans 9–11," *Tyndale Bulletin* (1966) 67, no. 1 (2016): 41–62; Jeremy Cohen, "The Mystery of Israel's Salvation: Romans 11:25–26 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis," *The Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 3 (2005): 247–281; James A. Loader, "The Beautiful Infant and Israel's Salvation," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 67, no. 1 (2011): e1–e9; F. Scott. Spencer, "Metaphor, Mystery and the Salvation of Israel in Romans 9–11: Paul's Appeal to Humility and Doxology," *Review and Expositor* (Berne) 103, no. 1 (2006): 113–138; John J. Johnson, "A New Testament Understanding of the Jewish Rejection of Jesus: Four Theologians on the Salvation of Israel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 2 (2000): 229.

that could be lost, not salvation. Again, this dissertation is not theological but expositional; yet it requires this distinction.

Therefore, the author differentiates genuine faith, initiated and perfected by Christ, and other pseudo-faith (Hebrews 12:2) created presumably, by the works of people. In the previous chapter, the author of Hebrews made a strong point about the need for the people of God to hold fast to faith in God, lest this inheritance is lost. Notice the rhetorical aspect of this proposition. The rest that the author of Hebrews conveys that they would obtain was not leisure but completion of the work God had assigned to them. Again, not about losing something brought by Christ as in the OT covenant formulary, which gave them a *quit pro quo* status.

Methodically, the author of Hebrews develops the dichotomy of those who heard the good news but were not united by faith, as seen in Hebrews 4:2, and those who heard it and were joined by faith. Therefore, the critical concept and the emphasis of the author of Hebrews was the lack of confidence, not the loss of something. The author alluded to obtaining true faith vs. a pseudo-religion based on their works or understanding. As a result, the author emphasized the doubt that the NCP may have had or may have in the future related to faith.<sup>251</sup> The same doubt remains true today, but because of the superior things in Christ, this faith is not in people but in Him. The author of Hebrews expressed that the people of the OT often showed confidence in themselves and their positions because of the name afforded to them as sons of Abraham. He shows them that this faith should be based on Christ alone.

But Christ brought a much better position for them with a new covenant, and as will be seen in the next verse, faith is the required ingredient. The author develops the concept of faith

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<sup>251</sup> Doubt affects many of us and it affected the Israelites as well. See Jay Bakker, and Andy Meisenheimer, *Faith, Doubt, and Other Lines I've Crossed: Walking with the Unknown God*, 1st ed. (New York: Jericho, 2013); Neal Krause, and Kenneth I. Pargament, "Losing My Religion: Exploring the Relationship between a Decline in Faith and a Positive Affect," *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 12, no. 4 (2016;2017;): 885–901.

more than salvation, as he exhausted this concept by comparing people in the OT and their faith. Thus, he used known constructs for the Israelites to imply that faith was an essential component metaphorically. Again, it can show how he develops the two opposite sides of the spectrum in the previous verse. Yet, he makes sure that the people of the NCP understand that it is only because of the Superiority of Christ accomplished, and he does this rhetorically.

The next verse outside chapter eleven speaking of faith is equally as important, which show in Hebrews 10:38 (NASB), where he states, "But My righteous one will live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him." Again, there is no mention of losing anything but of lacking faith. The prior verse incorporates a combined paraphrase of OT writings. One is Isaiah 26:21, and the other is Habakkuk 2:3-4. The context of this remark is encouragement, following the consequence of not having faith. The author gave them a description of God's punishment for those who willfully reject His will—followed by words of reassurance, reminding the letter's original readers that they had already endured persecution in the past.<sup>252</sup>

The author intends to highlight the primary theme throughout the letter of Hebrews. God has made it clear that Jesus is His solution for sin and the source of eternal salvation, and with that confidence, to hold fast to the faith. Those who fall into doubt or disobedience will be subject to consequences (Hebrews 3:12–19), though they cannot lose their eternal salvation (John 10:28–29). This combination of exposition and exhortations fills the gap between the two

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<sup>252</sup> To learn more about the persecution of the early church, see William Horbury, "W.H.C. Frend on Martyrdom and Persecution; Links between Judaism and the Early Church," *Early Christianity* 8, no. 4 (2017): 425–446; James Thornton, "Early Church Grew Despite Persecution: That Truth Wins Out in the End is Evidenced by the Expansion of the Early Church in Roman Territory, Even as Emperors had Christians Hunted Down, Tortured, and Killed," *The New American (Belmont, Mass.)* 32, no. 24 (2016): 33; Willis G. Swartz, "The Early Church Persecution of Paganism and Heresy," *Social Science* 2, no. 2 (1927): 135–142; G. S. R. Thomas, "Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church," *Journal of Religious History* 5, no. 3 (1969): 248–254.

major sections of this Letter. Earlier, the writer explained how the New Covenant is superior to the old covenant. Through the rest of the Letter, he will expand on the meaning and application of these truths. The unpacking of this socio-linguistical approach is essential to show how the idea of better things applies, over and over throughout the entire Epistle, to this new Jewish community, one of the blended cultures.

### **Jewish Identity Compared to Other Cultures and Faith**

The identity of the Jewish people derived from the fact that their patriarch walked and talked before God as described in Genesis 17:1. Still, God established His Covenant between them as God changed Abram's name to Abraham based on Abraham's submission to God.<sup>253</sup> A covenant is not unique but unmatched by any other culture, as far as this research can see in any ANE literature. This YHWH came down to earth, unlike any other God, and spoke and dwelled among His people (the People of God).<sup>254</sup> This characteristic of God emerges in Hebrew scriptures. A reader can read in other ANE texts that the gods separated themselves from those they governed or those they created and ruled.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> The basic history of the Jewish people can be seen in Chaya Greenberger, "the Submission of Abraham," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2017): 73; Annette Yoshiko Reed, "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 40, no. 2 (2009): 185–212; Blake A Jurgens, "A Wandering Aramean in Pharaoh's Court: The Literary Relationship between Abram's Sojourn in Egypt in 1QapGen 19-20 and Jewish Fictional Literature," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 49, no. 3 (2018): 356–389; Ari Mermelstein, "When History Repeats Itself: The Theological Significance of the Abrahamic Covenant in Early Jewish Writings," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 27, no. 2 (2017): 113–142.

<sup>254</sup> A nuanced interpretation of Zechariah 2:15 which is the only one among all the prophecies about the pilgrimage of the nations to Mount Zion that calls the non-Jewish nations "people of God." There is an intertextual relationship and discussion that supports the literary connection between Zechariah 2:15 and Revelation 21:3, brings the risk of challenging my prior statement, see Michael P. Maier, "Another People of God? Exegesis and Reception of Zechariah 2:15," *Vetus Testamentum* 68, no. 3 (2018): 415–435.

<sup>255</sup> The contrast is quite remarkable when it comes on any of the accounts of the ancient near eastern text as it relates to biblical explanation found to have a polemic approach, on the one hand see Victor Harold Matthews and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*. Fully revised and expanded, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Paulist Press, 2016. On the other hand, see, Jan Dietrich, "Friendship with God: Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Perspectives." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament: SJOT* 28, no. 2

Twice in the Epistle, the author of Hebrews mentions the people of God. The first time appears in Hebrews 4:9. The author contextually explained that the rest of Israel in Canaan was not the ultimate, permanent rest offered by Christ in Hebrews 4:8. The Psalmist David appealed to the people to seek after God's rest in the present time, as it shows in Psalm 95. The author makes a point of the Hebrews that since the Sabbath's rest from creation in Hebrews 4:3–4 is ongoing, the rest He offers is available in the present time to those willing to trust and obey. These are the people of God or the now-called people of the NCP. The author of Hebrews now included Greeks into the mixture with his blending of rhetoric.

In the book of Hebrews, it can be compared that the rest spoken of is not about eternal salvation. Canaan, in this passage, was not the symbol of heaven as a final destination. It is God who will save for all eternity those who come to Him in faith (John 6:39–40), but He will only give an inheritance of rewards to those who hold fast to their faith in Revelation 2:26–27. This inheritance is where the NCP that the author of Hebrews explained clarifies with his dual rhetoric. This rest is only obtained by following the examples of Christ and avoiding the example of Israel. God rested when His work was complete, and so shall His people. The Bible clearly shows that Israel missed their rest when it failed to complete its designated works. In the same way, saved Christians must strive to complete the work God has given but not obtain anything already granted in Christ, which, although entirely accomplished, is not fully realized to all believers until perhaps later. This work could not indicate losing something but rather holding on to something.

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(2014): 157–171; Daniel P Bricker, "'God so Near': An Examination of the Ancient Near Eastern Setting for Deuteronomy 4:7 and קרבים." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 22, no. 3 (2012): 335–352; Joann Scurlock, "Ancient Mesopotamian House Gods." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 3, no. 1 (2003): 99–106; Daniel Schwemer, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies: Part II." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 8, no. 1 (2008): 1–44; Jonathan L. Ready, "Zeus, Ancient Near Eastern Notions of Divine Incomparability, and Similes in the Homeric Epics." *Classical Antiquity* 31, no. 1 (2012): 56–91.

Hebrews chapter eleven is the famous faith chapter. The author of Hebrews described this kind of faith earlier as reasoned, obedient, forward-looking trust in God, as seen in Hebrews 11:1–3. The author places Old Testament figures who lived out their reliance on God, even when they could not see how God was working. Hebrews 11 emphasizes what these faithful ones faced. These were drastic, immediate dilemmas, such as Abraham's obedience regarding Isaac in Hebrews 11:17–19 and Moses' apparent disobedience to Pharaoh's evil commands in Hebrews 11:23.

The author of Hebrews describes Moses as a man who exhibited true, godly faith.<sup>256</sup> Interestingly, Moses appears as rejecting his more lucrative adoptive status in Pharaoh's house in Hebrews 11:24–25 and accepting his less attractive Israeli bloodline status. The author of Hebrews shows a deliberate decision by Moses to include himself among the people of God, even as they were abused and persecuted in Exodus 1:8–14. Moses chose to suffer rather than take the easier road and live in the Egyptian palace. It appears that Moses was fully aware of his Jewish heritage in Exodus 2:1–10. His willingness to choose Israel over Egypt suggests he was also aware of Israel's history and God's promises to that nation. The author of Hebrews knew this

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<sup>256</sup> A lot can be said about this biblical character named Moses. In fact, much has been written about him, see Stephen A Newman, "Moses is Cured of Leprosy," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2016): 166–168; Stephen A Newman, "Why Moses did Not Circumcise His Son," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2016): 50–52; Patricia Berlyn, "The Pharaohs Who Knew Moses," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2011): 3–14; Bill T Arnold, "Review of Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible Siphut," 3, Translated by James D. Nogalski (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010). *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13, (2013); David J Zucker, "Elijah and Elisha: Part I: Moses and Joshua," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2012): 225–230; Emily O. Gravett, "'Who Am I?' The Biblical Moses as a Metaphor for Teaching," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 18, no. 2 (2015): 159–169; Joel Litke, "Moses at the Waters of Meribah," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2011): 31; David A. Lambert, "How the 'Torah of Moses' Became Revelation: An Early, Apocalyptic Theory of Pentateuchal Origins," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 47, no. 1 (2016): 22–54; Teona Sukhiashvili, "Moses in the Qur'an," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1–9; Yossef Schwartz, "From Moses to Moses: Late Medieval Jewish and Christian Interpretation of Moses's Prophecy," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 11, no. 12 (2020): 632–pp 16; Robert R. Appleton, "Is there a Pattern to the Five Books of Moses?" *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2008): 39–48; David Lambert, "How the 'Torah of Moses' Became Revelation," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 47, no. 1 (2016): 22–54; Shubert Spero, "Pharaoh's Three Offers, Moses' Rejection, and the Issues they Foreshadowed," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2010): 93.

reliance and now is applying it to the NCP. As a result, the people of God are not limited to the nation of Israel, but it extends to the Gentiles.

### **God's Final Covenant with His People**

God has loved the nation of Israel from its inception. Jesus referred to them in the gospels as "a vineyard," a metaphor for the people of God when He told the parable of the wicked vine-growers in Mark 12:1–12. The distinction comes from the author of Hebrews. The concept of "covenant," used in the NT twenty-nine times and out of those twenty-nine, sixteen times in sixteen verses, was used by the author of Hebrews. This evidence is compelling since the covenant was an essential aspect in the mind of the author of Hebrews. The word *διαθήκης* *diatheikēs* or covenant is found nineteen times in those sixteen verses.

The author was either making a comparison, but for the most part, he was showing a better covenant, a new covenant, unlike the ones of the past. He mentioned the blood of the covenant, which in Jesus' name, was the eternal covenant now made in Him.<sup>257</sup> This comparison is why it appears that the covenant formulary was not the intention of the author of Hebrews when he was relaying the elements found within the passages selected. The people of God had become accustomed to enjoying a unique position throughout the canonization of the Hebrew Bible. This NCP is yet another revelation that the author of Hebrews was revealing to the new people of God through the New Covenant using Jewish and Greek rhetoric.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> For a full discussion on covenants, see Knox Chambling, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. John S. Feindberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 181–202; Greg L. Bahnsen, "The Theonomic Reformed Approach to Law and Gospels," in *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. Wayne Strickland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 93–143; Thomas R. Schreiner, and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 150–57; Peter J. Gentry, and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 608.

<sup>258</sup> For a discussion on the New Covenant of Christ, see, R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, vol. 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 28; Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'New Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," in *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese*

A considerable distinction is between the covenant formulary used in the OT and the new rhetorical usage of the elements by the author of Hebrews. Not in the same way as previously indicated by other scholars using Jewish rhetoric only, but contrary to any other scholar that has shown the wrong rhetorical genre within the Epistle. The author used deliberative rhetoric as well as Jewish rhetoric combined. Of course, the translation and transliteration of the passages in the next chapter will be all personal. They may not be found in any other commentary or scholarly citation yet.<sup>259</sup> A semantic range that appears to be more relevant for the proper interpretation has emerged, which shows congruency with the contemporary rhetorical usage of both Jewish and Greek cultures combined or more conducive to the socio-linguistical interpretation approach.

To some, the warning passages are akin to a sign on the road, which prudent people will not go any further because of the consequence, while those not so cautious would. The researcher must address any possible tension of this problem, which the research can only do with exposition. Viewed within the lens of rhetorical deliberative prose, it is inevitable that the author never intended to have them believe that they could lose anything but dissuaded them

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*Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Susan Haber, "From Priestly Torah to Christ Cultus: The Re-Vision of Covenant and Cult in Hebrews," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 28, no. 1 (2005): 105–124; Andrew R. Davis, "A Biblical View of Covenants Old and New," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 81, no. 3 (2020): 631–648.

<sup>259</sup> Although the idea of inclusion by other scholars in their corresponding research is one of prestige, the intention in the expositional interpretation in this dissertation is not to be confused as one that seeks only fame or inclusion but rather a solution to a long-standing problem within the Epistle to the Hebrews. In doing so, the author is very familiar with the way by which this dissertation may be categorized, see Timothy J. Sandoval, "Latino/a/x Biblical Interpretation Related to the Hebrew Bible," *Currents in Biblical Research* 16, no. 3 (2018): 236–262. Rather, it would be acceptable if this dissertation or other materials that may come from the same are viewed in the scholastic fashion for purposes of dialogue and exposition and not as contention, see Marvin A. Sweeney, "Jewish Biblical Theology: An Ongoing Dialogue," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 70, no. 3 (2016): 314–325; Aaron Edwards, "Thus Saith the Word: The Theological Relationship between Biblical Exposition and Prophetic Utterance in Preaching," *Expository Times* 125, no. 11 (2014): 521–530; Di Mattei, Steven, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21–31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *New Testament Studies* 52, no. 1 (2006): 102–122.

from departing from their faith, two cultures at the peril of the times needing direction on their decisions.<sup>260</sup>

The author of Hebrews used the deliberative rhetorical method and Jewish rhetoric throughout the Epistle. But, to bring a complete and more elaborate exposition, ten passages from within the Epistle have been selected. Seven of the ten come straight from what scholars have identified as the "warning passages" in the book of Hebrews. All of them show Jewish and Greek deliberative rhetoric within them. The researcher selected the remaining three passages to offer a nuanced distinction and the importance of applying the correct rhetorical methodology. As it shall be confirmed, it was one mainly of deliberate fashion done to address the duality of cultures.

### Summary

This chapter started with the idea of a New Christian Position and a discussion of Hebrew covenants. The researcher discussed the Pentateuch and Psalms and a new community with its progression and typologies in Hebrews. The researcher explained terminology, and the revelation of the NCP emerged due to the author's ethical and practical method of message delivery. Using echoes, allusions, and quotations from the OT, with typologies and intertextuality, a moral and practical message was created that simultaneously addressed both cultures. This duality approach has emerged from other utilitarian cultures to unite.<sup>261</sup>

The usage of warnings in the OT, idolatry, the comparison of some vital prophetic texts, restoration motifs, and some chapters of Hosea revealed a progression that the author of Hebrews

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<sup>260</sup> Royce M. Victor, "The Politics of "Invasion" of Greek and the "Demise" of Hebrew of Late Antiquity," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 39, no. 1 (2017): 68–81.

<sup>261</sup> Tan Weihua, Li Chun, Stephen Zolvenski, and Tian Guang, "Beyond Rational and Utilitarian Action: Moral and Emotional Giving within Chinese Folk Religion," *Society (New Brunswick)* 58, no. 5 (2021): 365–379.

was undertaking. The researcher discussed other ANE cultures and analyzed idolatry's impact on Jewish and contemporary cultures. The researcher examined the usage of warnings in the NT to compare whether the message of the book of Hebrews was warnings or something else. The passages studied were expressed as exhortations within deliberative rhetoric, showing progression in the redemptive plan for the people of God.

The researcher explained salvation and faith as they appeared in the book. The researcher compared the identity of the Jewish people to other cultures. The researcher noticed that the faith God wanted them to keep and share was now possible in the NCP. The chapter ended with God's final covenant, which leads into the exposition of the passages selected, found in the book of Hebrews—all showing the intended unity by the author. This unity was a foreign concept to the Jews and Greeks, where so much idolatry was evident. The author of Hebrews found a way to communicate the need for unity.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXPOSITION

In its simplest form, exposition explains an idea or theory. In biblical definition, the concern is finding the original author's intended meaning. As such, concerning biblical commentary, there is a range, according to scholars, of distinct interpretative priorities and practices that have appeared surrounding different books of the Bible. Some committees that have interpreted the various versions of the Bible have allowed mystical meanings to take place.<sup>262</sup> For this exposition, there has been a selection of the shorter version of ten verses, as

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<sup>262</sup> For this section, and to elaborate on the exposition, it will be gone as far as the fourteen centuries to follow the trajectory of biblical exposition, see A. B Kraebel, *Biblical Commentary and Translation in Later Medieval England: Experiments in Interpretation*, vol. 109 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Mathew, which three chapters are the key and the dore of the Scripture*, (Antwerp: Johannes Grapheus, 1533); Henry Walter, *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of the Holy Scriptures, together with the Practice of Prelates*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849); Thomas Betteridge "William Tyndale and Religious Debate," *JMEMS* 40 (2010): 439–61; Jeremy Catto, "Written English: The Making of the Language, 1370–1400," *Past and Present* 179 (2003): 24–59; Dale Coulter, "Historia and Sensus Litteralis: An Investigation into the Approach to Literal Interpretation at the Twelfth-Century School of St. Victor," In *Transforming Relations: Essays on Jews and Christians throughout History in Honor of Michael A. Signer*, ed. Franklin Harkins, 101–24 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); William Courtenay, "The Bible in the Fourteenth Century: Some Observations," *Church History* 54 (1985): 176–87. Some have even gone as far as indicating that they are "inspired" commentators, see Andrew Kraebel, "The Inspired Commentator: Theories of Interpretive Authority in the Writings of Richard Rolle," In *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism: Beyond Scholasticism*, ed. Ardis Butterfield, Ian Johnson, and Andrew Kraebel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). For reasons of concision, again, it will only be discussed the KJV interpretative committees, see John Bois, Ward Allen, Anthony Walker, Oxford (England). University. Corpus Christi College. Library, and Inc NetLibrary. *Translating for King James: Being a True Copy of the Only Notes made by a Translator of King James's Bible, the Authorized Version, as the Final Committee of Review Revised the Translation of Romans through Revelation at Stationers' Hall in London in 1610–1611*, Paperback ed. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1993); David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible: An Account of the Development and Sources of the English Bible of 1611 with Special Reference to the Hebrew Tradition* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1968); Laurence M Vance, *King James, His Bible, and its Translators* (Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 2006); Deane E. Kogelschatz, *The Hidden King James Bible: What Translators Didn't Want You To Know* (Lincoln: NE, iUniverse, Inc, 2003), 1–20; R. B. Thieme, *Canonicity* (Houston: TX, R.B. Thieme Jr. Bible Ministries, 1973), 51–55; Alister E McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and how it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2001); G. A. Riplinger *Which Bible is God's Word?* (Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications Corp, 2007); G.A. Riplinger, *King James and His Translators* (Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications Corp, 2003); Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005); David Norton, *A History of the English Bible as Literature* (New York; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000); Philip W Goodwin, *Translating the English Bible: From Relevance to Deconstruction* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2013); Wu Guangjun, and Liu Tingting, "The Transformation of Translational Identity and the Shift of Translation Style: A Comparison of the Three Versions of the She King," Translated by James Legge, *Perspectives, Studies in Translatology* 24, no. 1 (2016): 130–141; Lenn Goodman, "The King James Bible at 401," *Society (New Brunswick)* 50, no. 1 (2013): 73–80; W. B Patterson, (William Brown). *The King James Bible in Cultural Context*, vol. 120 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012). A copy of the original notes is available from John Bois, one of the translators of the "Authorized Version" of the Bible—a term

discussed in previous chapters, of the allusive warning passages in the book of Hebrews. The intended goal is for the exposition to be both intellectual and attitudinal.<sup>263</sup>

### The Current Exposition of the Book of Hebrews

Noticeably, as McKnight has presented, the current application of elements or components to the book of Hebrews appears to have been misapplied. He uses them like the OT used the covenant formulary elements in the form of blessings and curses.<sup>264</sup> Although it seems that the author of Hebrews was using some elements or components in the presentation of his Epistle, perhaps the author was using these elements in a completely different way. It appears that these elements were rhetorically applicable 1) to the audience of the exhortation, 2) by the action reflected in the exhortation, 3) for the aim of the exhortation, and 4) with an account for the exhortation. The author included these elements within his Epistle. Most likely, the audience understood the aspects rhetorically. But only using a socio-linguistical approach, could these

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that will not be refuted herein—which nevertheless helps to show the intention on the exposition of the pertinent passages of the book of Hebrews.

<sup>263</sup> The term exposition will be using the pertinent definition as found in Donald K McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed., revised and expanded., (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 114 and the contrast found in Chris Baldick, "Exposition," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford University Press, 2008) as it relates to discourse. The goal of the exposition is two-fold, as described by Donald Alfred Hagner, *Encountering the Book of Hebrews: An Exposition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 15 and to show some distinctive approaches to exposition based on a different perspective, see Fredrick Holmgren, Carlson, and Herman E. Schaalman, *Preaching Biblical Texts: Expositions by Jewish and Christian Scholars* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995). This is imperative to demonstrate the attitudinal position that the audience in the book of Hebrews had regarding their assurance of better things in Christ.

<sup>264</sup> For more discussion of OT covenant formulary see, William McKane, "The Covenant Formulary: In Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings," by Klaus Baltzer. Blackwell, Oxford, 1971, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26, no. 1 (1973): 112–113. When the research talks about covenant formulary, this is described by Klaus Baltzer *Das Bundesformular, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament* 4 (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Neukirchener, 1960). ET *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings*, trans. David Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). Others have argued that other NT books show the same type of formulary, for example William Shea, "The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches," AUSS 21 (1983): 71–84, argued that the letters to the church in Revelation uses this formulary.

elements now be viewed as rhetorical and pertinent to their future in an exhortative way. Hence, this research used a different name.

Some scholars believe that given the form of the warnings presented by the author, the clients can repudiate or purge the sins removed from them in the past. Even though accepting Christ as Lord and Savior, thereby giving what appears to be synergism to the futuristic salvation. Coincidentally, this would be an epideictic approach in their arguments. But, once the proper rhetorical posture of the author of Hebrews' writings is adequately understood, the interpretation becomes far away from this approach.

Naturally, it is time for the modern scholarship to move the debate forward by suggesting alternatives for nomenclature other than those postulated within the 60s and the scholars that followed, as it presents no solution to the problems with the interpretation of the passages. Believing that any believer could lose something simply by not adhering to the warning passages found in the book of Hebrews, whether those warnings were rhetorical or hortatory, could be a dangerous proposition. This postulation remains by those scholars who believe there is synergism when it comes to salvation instead of monergism, where God works through the Holy Spirit. He brings about the salvation of the individuals by spiritual regeneration without the individual's cooperation.<sup>265</sup> Is there an alternative to this exposition?

### **Applicational Exposition to the Book of Hebrews**

Again, as an integral part of the exposition, using the four described elements: 1) audience, 2) action, 3) aim, and 4) account will apply throughout the exposition of ten verses. In doing so, a pattern will emerge that shows that the author of Hebrews encouraged them about

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<sup>265</sup> There are many books of monergism but for a review see, Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Calling and Regeneration* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2013), 22–41.

their attitudinal position, the NCP, without warning them about any possibility of losing their status. Because a new covenant in Christ was far superior: better things were not inclusive of old things. In Jewish history, it appears that any Israelite who willfully rejected the law would be excluded from the community and would have been excluded from the world to come.<sup>266</sup> But in the NT, exclusion comes only by rejecting Christ, not by the performance of individuals.

Now what is left is to analyze whether warnings could have appeared as means for someone to lose their community or position. As a result, a triangulation emerges or a pattern that explains that the covenant formulary of the OT is not the same formulary that the author of Hebrews was using. The only way that the author of Hebrews could have changed the minds of the Jewish people was to employ Jewish rhetoric and Greek deliberative rhetoric simultaneously so that there could be no misunderstanding on their part. Christ has brought, not the same as, the old, but better things.

As this exposition emerges, the reader must remember that a crucial hermeneutical issue for the same is the relationship between teaching the text as written with the original author's intent in mind. Then, acknowledging the "many" and "various" ways in which God spoke through the Scriptures (Heb 1:1–2) and continues to do so. Simply to alleviate any potential discords within the canonical teachings of any of the doctrines, as one teaching cannot contradict other teachings. Not to say there are no tensions between the instructions, but simply to say that the overall message must be congruent even though it shows phonological patterns.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Jewish teachers would teach that this was the unpardonable sin. See Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 641. This argument found in Hebrews is one presented as a natural Jewish *qal vahomer* form, or a how much more assertion, if the lesser point applies, would the greater point have. Of course, I am referring to the greater principle of Jesus' atonement for the sins of His people, much greater than what any other High Priest could have done for them in the past. As a result, a covenantal position was attained far greater than the one they had before.

<sup>267</sup> Arthur Keefer, "Phonological Patterns in the Hebrew Bible: A Century of Studies in Sound," *Currents in Biblical Research* 15, no. 1 (2016): 41–64.

## Phonological Exposition

For example, it cannot appear that biblical writings teach that eternal life is a gift, then to say that it is not, that it must be earned, mainly because of these infamous warning passages. The overall teaching must be one that a reader can follow canonically and phonologically. Only when the progression of God's plan for His people is analyzed can one see that this gift is of better things, which would not violate the principle of non-contradiction. The subsequent implication to preach Christ to everyone, directed towards encouraging the elect to hear and respond to the unchanging word spoken by God in his Son, makes losing this gift impossible.<sup>268</sup> The best way to accomplish this task was to reiterate with Jewish rhetoric the dissuasion of the covenant formulary coupled with deliberative rhetoric to show better things in Christ for those in the NCP.

Phonologically, the structural spectrum presented by scholars as it relates to the book of Hebrews notices that the author had a back-and-forth switch between exposition and exhortation throughout the Epistle. This research saw that in 1928, scholars made this first discovery.<sup>269</sup> Based on this back-and-forth movement, the expositional demonstration that brings forth the seven actions has emerged. The author of Hebrews conveyed an overall motif of "exhortation" for the people with the concept of better things.

In Classical Greek, phonologically, it sounds as if the Epistle to the Hebrews appeared to encourage the readers (hearers). So that they could persevere in their faith in Jesus, as he presented Him and the covenant in His blood with Superiority to the old covenant found in the OT using both Greek and Hebrew rhetoric. Even though the purported use of the covenant

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<sup>268</sup> J. Daryl Charles, "Assessing Recent Pronouncements on Justification: Evidence from "The Gift of Salvation" and the Catholic Catechism," *Pro Ecclesia (Northfield, Minn.)* 8, no. 4 (1999): 459–474.

<sup>269</sup> Hermann Gunkel, and Leopold Zscharnack, eds., *Religion in Gensichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 2d ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), s.v. "Hebräerbrief," F. Büchsel.

formulary, and thus the implied retributory theology behind these warning passages, exists, the overall idea of better things must indicate something that the people of God had never witnessed before.<sup>270</sup> This concept can emerge as a preconceived notion. Still, it appears to support the thorough exposition because both types of rhetoric showed in the Epistle. The author of The Epistle used many individualized ethics and practical actions to explain them rhetorically.

### Idiomatic Expressions

Another issue to consider, as the original language exposition occurs, is whether there are idiomatic expressions within the passages.<sup>271</sup> This issue is fundamental. Mistranslating these idiomatic expressions results in a misinterpretation of the passage. During this exposition, this research will analyze the pertinent idiomatic expressions found in Hebrews 6:1 and Hebrews 13:13, idiomatic expressions found within the supposed warnings, to see if they bear any significance to the tension found within scholarship.

The reader must know that over 50 idiomatic expressions are found within the Book of Hebrews, and not all appear to have been adequately translated.<sup>272</sup> This phenomenon alone could account for the inappropriate label of warning placed on some of the pericopes. Also, the fact that the author of Hebrews used Jewish idiomatic expressions could point towards another

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<sup>270</sup> Research shows a study that proposed the opposite of what this research has shown, but it is believed that the biblical account would support this assertion rather than disprove it. For a contrary view, see, Walter Pohl, "Comparing Communities-the Limits of Typology," *History and Anthropology* 26, no. 1 (2015): 18–35. The basic premise of this study is that typologies do not form a basis for comparison between people equally situated; however, I whole hardly disagree because of the strong concept of better things for those similarly situated within the new covenant in Christ which expresses a comparative spectrum and attitudes between the canons.

<sup>271</sup> An idiomatic expression would yield a different result in translation than perhaps the ones that have been currently given for anyone to call the passages as warnings rather than exhortations, see Bianca-Iuliana Misinciuc, "An Experimental Analysis of Metaphorical Thinking in Relation to Idiomatic Expressions," *Philobiblon (Cluj, Romania)* 24, no. 2 (2019): 265–275.

<sup>272</sup> According to some scholars, there are a total of 92 potential idiomatic expressions of any kind within the book of Hebrews, see Georg Benedikt Winer, *A Grammar of the Idioms of the Greek Language of the New Testament: Scholars Select* (Philadelphia: T.K & P.G Printers, 1840), 468–69.

account for the misnomer of warnings. The author may have been encouraging them in a way known to them, but not to subsequent readers, into making a policy decision of direction.

### **The Different Bible Translations**

Different Bible translations have identified whether a particular pericope would be considered a warning passage differently. There are some interesting findings concerning the warning passages and their relativity to warning as seen by different biblical translations.<sup>273</sup> For example, the first called warning passage has been labeled as such by the following translations: CSB, Warning Against Neglect; ESV, Warning Against Neglecting Salvation; NIV, Warning to Pay Attention; NLT, Warning Against Drifting Away; LSB, Warning Against Neglecting Salvation. The following translations have labeled this pericope as Give Heed or Pay Attention, but no warning is mentioned: KJV, NASB95, NASB20, NET, RSV, ASV, YLT, DBY, WEB, HNV. The NKJV stands alone and is labeled Do Not Neglect Salvation.

The same is true for all the pericopes identified as warning passages: there is no consensus on which label to place on them. Peculiarly, out of all the translations examined, only the NIV labels the second pericope as a warning in this way: Warning Against Unbelief, whereas no other version gives a label to it. The third warning passage is only identified in the NIV and ESV; the different versions label it as a Problem with Immaturity but not a warning. Interestingly, the fourth warning passage is not called as such by any of the translations reviewed, but it is labeled as Full Assurance of Faith by the ESV, A Call to Persevere by the NLT, NIV; Exhortation to Godliness by the CSB; A New Living Way by all others. The KNJV

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<sup>273</sup> Bible translations have given different meanings to different passages throughout history of interpretation of the scriptures, the book of Hebrews has not been immune to this phenomenon, see Marlon Winedt, "Bible Translation as Incarnation of the Word of God: Transformational Power through Form and Meaning," *The Bible Translator* 72, no. 2 (2021): 220–240.

label is Hold Fast to Your Confession. The last warning passage is labeled as such by the NIV and CSB; all other versions have different labeling in place.<sup>274</sup>

The above exercise could not appear as exposition but simply as an example to show the myriad of interpretative efforts by different biblical committees and the lack of consensus from each of those versions mentioned. No wonder there is such a spectrum of interpretations of these warning passages. It would be illogical to think that the following exposition would culminate in blending all biblical committees and that a single translation or commentary would do the trick, but far from it. As a result of theological posturing, this would perhaps be more a dream than it would ever be a reality. Thus, a digression.

### **The Odyssey**

All scholars must remember that the letter to the Hebrews starts by presenting Jesus as the culmination of the revelation of God. There is an odyssey with the author showing how the old covenant pointed towards a new and better covenant in Christ, regardless of where they find themselves in the spectrums of interpretation. Perhaps the exposition can show that an odyssey through the OT given by the author was accomplished and accompanied by seven exhortations. These appeals are better-called movements within the Epistle that encourage the believers to persevere, reminding them of the need to keep firm in their faith in Christ or keep their new direction. This direction was ethical and practical at the same time. This direction shows the author's intended purpose, an applicational approach in a new order.

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<sup>274</sup> It is not uncommon for some Bible translations to use different labels for different pericopes, see J. Ian H. McDonald, "The So-Called Pericope De Adultera," *New Testament Studies* 41, no. 3 (1995): 415–427.

This approach is not a preconceived notion but a paradigm shift noticed throughout the Epistle.<sup>275</sup> This paradigm shift will be shown and taught within the outline by the Roman numerals appearing in the following scenario. A reader should see that superior things are indicated all over the Epistle, and the author had no shortage of words expressing this idea of better things. The famous chapter of faith proceeds to the final chapter of the calling to rid of sin and to run the race looking solely to Jesus until the end. Below is the outline that mentions these movements and is indicated by Roman Numerals. It is worth noticing that each "warning passage," as called by prior scholars, has been changed and characterized by an exhortation given by the author of Hebrews to corroborate the attitudinal position that the people of the NCP now had in Christ! No other scholar has made this connection. Following is the general outline.

## **OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS**

### **I. SUPERIORITY OF THE SON OF GOD (1:1–2:18)-11 HPB**

#### **A. Jesus as the Ultimate Revealer (1:1–4)**

##### **1. Better than angels, First κρείττων**

#### **B. The Enthronement of Jesus (1:1–14) First Exposition-2 HPB**

#### **C. Invitation to Receive the New Revelation (2:1–4) First Exhortation (1<sup>st</sup> WP)**

##### **a. Hebrews 2:1-For this reason**

#### **D. The Incarnation & Superiority of Jesus (2:5–13) Second Exposition-2 HPB**

#### **E. The Suffering Servant (2:14–18) Second Exhortation**

### **II. SUPERIORITY OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE SON OF GOD (3:1–4:16)-6 HPB**

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<sup>275</sup> Kateřina Kočí, "Interpreting the Bible Against Postmodern Biblical Hermeneutics: The Role of Time and Tradition," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Theologica* 4, no. 2 (2014): 219–231.

- A. Christ Superior to Moses (3:1–6) **Third Exposition-2 HPB**
- B. The Imitation of Christ (3:7–4:13) **Third Exhortation (2<sup>nd</sup> WP)**
  - a. **Hebrews 4:1- Therefore**
- C. The Assurance of Achieving Salvation (4:14–16) **Forth Exposition-0 HPB**
  - a. **Hebrews 4:11- Therefore**
  - b. **Hebrews 4:16- Therefore**

### **III. SUPERIORITY OF THE WORKS OF THE SON OF GOD (5:1–6:20)-9 HPB**

- A. According to the Old System (5:1–10)
- B. The Spiritual Dichotomy (5:11–6:20) **Forth Exhortation (3<sup>rd</sup> WP)**
  - a. **Hebrews 6:1-Therefore**
    - 1. **Better things, Second κρείττων (6:9)**

### **IV. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE SON OF GOD (7:1–10:39)-27 HPB**

- A. High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek (7:1–28) **Fifth Exposition- 5 HPB**
  - 1. **Better Blessings, Third κρείττων (7:7)**
  - 2. **Better Hope, Fourth κρείττων (7:19)**
  - 3. **Better Covenant, Fifth κρείττων (7:22)**
- B. Heavenly High Priest (8:1–10,18)
  - 1. **Better Promises, Sixth κρείττων (8:6)**
- C. The Old Temple items (9:1-5)
- D. The New Temple in Christ (9:6–10:18)
  - 1. **Better Sacrifices, Seventh κρείττων (9:23)**
- E. The New and Living Way (10:19–39) **Fifth Exhortation (4<sup>th</sup> WP)**
  - a. **Hebrews 10:22- Let us draw near**

**b. Hebrews 10:26- Therefore**

**1. The Better Possession, Eight κρείττων (10:34)**

**V. SUPERIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (11:1–12:2)-7 HPB**

**A. The Triumphs of Faith (11:1–40) Sixth Exposition- 6 HPB**

**1. Better Country, Ninth κρείττων (11:16)**

**2. Better Resurrection, Tenth κρείττων (11:35)**

**3. Better for Us, Eleventh κρείττων (11:40)**

**VI. SUPERIORITY OF THE PATH TO THE FATHER (12:3–29)-4 HPB**

**A. The Faith Dichotomy (12:1–29)**

**B. A Father's Discipline (12:14–29) Sixth Exhortation (5<sup>th</sup> WP)**

**a. Hebrews 12:1- Therefore**

**1. Better Blood, Twelfth κρείττων (12:24)**

**a. Hebrews 12:28- Therefore**

**VII. SUPERIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHURCH (13:1–25)-1 HPB**

**A. The Changeless Christ (13:1–14)**

**a. Hebrews 13:13- Therefore**

**B. Christ as the Ultimate Pleasing Sacrifice (13:15–19)**

**C. Benediction (13:20–25)**

Although there are twelve instances of the word κρείττων, it can be seen by the outline there are seven indications of superior things found within the Epistle. These are 1) The Superiority of the Son of God; 2) The Superiority of the Faithfulness of the Son of God; 3) The Superiority of the Works of the Son of God; 4) The Superiority of the Priesthood of the Son of God; 5) The Superiority of the Christian Faith; 6) The Superiority of the Path to the Father; 7)

The Superiority of the Christian Life and Church. These movements aimed to convey the concept of better things that the people of the NCP now enjoy for posterity.

### **The Ten Selected Verses Within the Book of Hebrews**

Ten verses have been exposed to bring validity to this research. The exposition shows that the author used a systematic approach with his structural writing and used the same elements to convey the possibility of the perseverance of those in the covenantal community simply by showing the Superiority of their NCP. Please notice that there appears to be a chiasmic structure from the selected passages in that it mirrors a sequence of ideas that are presented and then repeated in reverse order, but to assume that the author was doing so in delivering the Epistle may be speculative at best.<sup>276</sup> The researcher selected seven passages from the already known warning passages; the other three have the same structural components as "elements," as they shall appear. Paying close attention to the elements described, the usage of classical Greek, and the superiority κρείττων of the covenantal position that they now enjoy in Jesus, a "warning" could have never meant to be used in a way that may affect the gift from God. The author dissuaded and encouraged them to keep on with their ethical and practical directions.

### **Selected Passages Rationale**

A definite identification of the warning passages, for purposes of this dissertation, will be done according to scholar Hebert W. Bateman's proposition of the same, where he uses the

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<sup>276</sup> The view of chiasmic structure by several biblical authors has been extrapolated to the book of Hebrews, but I believe this is not the proper way to view the literary value of the same, see Victor Rhee, "The Role of Chiasm for Understanding Christology in Hebrews 1:1–14," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131, no. 2 (2012): 341–362; For an explanation of chiasmic structure see, Daniel C. Fredericks, "Chiasm and Parallel Structure in Qoheleth 5:9–6:9," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108, no. 1 (1989): 17–35; Anthony J. Tomasino, "Interpreting Esther from the Inside Out: Hermeneutical Implications of the Chiasmic Structure of the Book of Esther," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138, no. 1 (2019): 101–120.

more extended units of known warning passages found in (Hebrews 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; and 12:14–29), rather than the smaller units found in (Hebrews 2:1–4; 4:12–13; 6:4–8; 10:26–31; and 12:25–29).<sup>277</sup> This categorical arrangement is not to agree with the terminology warning passages but to show a progression.

The same has skyrocketed in the past and trended in the current era after Guthrie's structural analysis of Hebrews was published. To show impartiality, other passages not identified as warning passages have been selected for the exposition to apply the elements as described in this research. In establishing the author's intent in his usage, not a covenant formulary usage by the author of Hebrews, but rather, showing better things now in Christ within every verse of the ten selected passages, this research will take shape.

### Shorter Verses

Bateman acquiesces in his book that "it is not unreasonable to limit" these pericopes of the warning passages to smaller units. Coincidentally, the research took the scholarly liberty to do the entire exposition on much smaller units (one verse only). As a result, only ten verses have been selected, showing that a literary tool called *hyperbaton*, stylistic of classical Greek rhetoricians, was used prolifically within the book of Hebrews.<sup>278</sup> Suppose the hyperbaton is not syntactically analyzed within the entire Epistle.

This error would explain why the author used the OT as a covenant formulary to convey

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<sup>277</sup> In his book, Bateman compares the length of the warning passages from other scholars, mainly George H. Guthrie. See Bateman, *Four Views on the Warning Passages*, 27 quoting from George G. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (Grand Rapids; Baker, 1998), 127–39. Other scholars have made similar comparisons concerning the length of the warning passages, but most have agreed that five warning passages are covered in the book of Hebrews, so mentioning them is for continuity purposes. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton: Crossway 2001).

<sup>278</sup> The hyperbaton was the separation of words that were semantically and syntactically connected to indicate boundaries within their informational units, see Baugh, *Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews*, 200.

what is now known as the New Covenantal Position (NCP) to his audience. The author, repeatedly in a deliberative type of rhetoric, used hyperbaton. In his rhetorical way, the author's use yields the correct rhetoric. Dispelling once and for all the other types of rhetoric lacking in the Epistle.

## Rhetorical Criticism

Some scholars have attempted to employ rhetorical criticism (of various kinds) to make the book's message more precise. Still, it has created the opposite effect, as will be seen.<sup>279</sup> The ancient Jewish literary genre or rhetoric used in the book of Hebrews and the motif of superior employed so vividly in the Epistle has vanished during these rhetorical criticism adventures. Also, the covenant formulary found in the OT has been misapplied altogether and, perhaps, is yet another place where a schism of interpretation can occur. Historically, as it was typical of first-century sermons when viewed in its homiletical sense, the book of Hebrews contains: 1) illustrations (they appear in the use of Old Testament typology as the writer depicts Christ), 2) references (they appear in the multiple usages of the Old Testament references), and 3) hyperbole (they appear in the warning or exhortation passages). All of these were part of the sermons of ancient times, mainly first-century *anno domini* and second-temple Judaism.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> These scholars are from the postmodern era, see Barnabas Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," *NTS* 35 (1989): 382–406; C.F. Evans, *The Theology of Rhetoric: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1988); Michael Duane Morrison, "Rhetorical Function of the Covenant Motif in the Argument of Hebrews," (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006). It is apparent that the socio-rhetorical criticism is currently used by scholars to interpret the NT text in the book of Hebrews, and this was first developed by Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996) and *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1966), which was applied by deSilva in his writings, David deSilva *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SBLDS 152 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995) and *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

<sup>280</sup> A more complete explanation of second temple Judaism delivery of sermons can be found with D.A. Carson, and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 596, stating that F.F. Bruce calls Hebrews "a homily in written form, with some personal remarks added at the end," *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 389; David Noel Freedman, *The*

But none were utilized in epideictic or forensic ways when analyzed within the rhetorical frame of mind that the author was operating. Epideictic rhetoric is divided into praise or blame, whereas forensic is divided into accusation or defense.<sup>281</sup> Rhetoricians used the third for exhortation or dissuasion, both accomplished by the author of Hebrews. As a result of this dilemma, there is a need to further examine both the former and the latter prophets, particularly during the second temple Judaism writings as the book of Hebrews appears in context.<sup>282</sup> The Jewish authors applied rhetorical devices, even in the LXX, when interpreting and reporting.<sup>283</sup> As a result, a warning may not necessarily be a warning of impending doom, as the prophets of the OT gave when they pronounced judgments. These appealed to the new things and dissuasions old stuff for believers. The appeals and dissuasions appeared in Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, and 12:24. The author knew that future generations would share and accept the gospel news through evangelism and those reading the Word of God.<sup>284</sup>

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*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 280–81; Brian C. Small “The Use of Rhetorical *Topoi* in the Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews,” *PRSt* 37 (2010): 53–69; J.R. Waters, “The Rhetorical Arrangement of Hebrews,” *AsTJ* 51/2 (1996): 59–70; Walter G. Übelacker *Der Hebräer als Appell: Untersuchungen zu Exordium, Narratio und Postscriptum (Hebr 1–2 und 13, 22–25)*. *Coniectanea Neotestamentica* or *Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series* 21 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1989).

<sup>281</sup> The writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews was during the Hellenistic period and thus classical rhetoric must be analyzed when attempting to decipher the type, see Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period*, 43–50.

<sup>282</sup> It has been acknowledged that the warnings against apostasy in the book of Hebrews have created heated controversy, including, and not limited by Martin Luther and others, see Martin Luther, “Preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Word and Sacrament*, vol. 35 of Luther’s Works, ed. E. Theodore Bachman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 394. Also, it is known that the Western Church resisted the Epistle from canonization because it seems to have supported the teachings of the Montanist and the Novatians, see Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 23, 25; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origins, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 105.

<sup>283</sup> A brief explanation of this position can be seen in George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews’ Use of the Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research,” *CBR* 1.2 (2003): 272; Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 7–25; Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 9–82; Guthrie, “Hebrews’ Use of the Old Testament,” 271–94.

<sup>284</sup> This is the main distinction in *Anti-Eternal Security* theology, which is like the Montanists, who did not permit a second repentance for serious sins after baptism and the Novatians, who did not permit restoration for those who lapsed under persecution; consequently, they propose that the saints can still lose their salvation as they interpret the warning passages against apostasy. See Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 71. For the other side of the spectrum see

It is imperative to notice that the author of Hebrews makes a startling differentiation between the OT and NT when he states,

*By this, the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened if the first section is still standing (symbolic of the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshiper's conscience but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation (Hebrews 9:8–10).*

He tells this Jewish audience that Christ initiated something new for them in Hebrews 9:11–15, something better. Thus, it appears the concept of better things is born. In addition, the author of Hebrews effectively employed known covenant formulary and gives a fresh appeal to his claim (in exhortation) that this new covenant is the summation. He used his rhetorical knowledge retrospectively (in dissuasion) to show the fulfillment of the OT covenants now perfected in the NT through Jesus, the Better and Superior Covenant.

A new structural analysis of the book of Hebrews should cover a rhetorical stance using the OT (as discussed in chapter 3), emphasizing 1<sup>st</sup> Century Diaspora Classical Greek. To espouse the new message conveyed to the family of faith (as discussed in Chapter 2). The exposition of statements in the book of Hebrews with the classical Greek used (as discussed in this chapter) shows that the author could not have intended to present warning passages as a possible change in a person's status. Not like in the OT usage of the covenant formulary, but to show how much better the NCP relationship with God, a prominent motif, is using deliberative

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Wayne Grudem, *Perseverance of the Saints: A Case Study from the Warning Passages of Hebrews*, in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 173; D. A. Carson, "Reflections on Assurance," in Schreiner and Ware, *Still Sovereign*, 264, 267; Harold W. Attridge, and Helmut Koester, *Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1989), 10. This is the apparent dichotomy this dissertation attempts to address and reconcile.

rhetoric.<sup>285</sup> When one combines the correct rhetoric and usage of the socio-linguistical explanation, a new interpretation emerges, and the discussion follows.

### **Hebrews 2:1**

#### **Hebrews 2:1- Falls within the First "Warning Passage," Hebrews 2:1–4**

“διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως προσέχειν ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν μήποτε παραρυῶμεν”

"By this, we should take much more heed to the things that have been heard if it does not slip our minds." In Classical Greek, authors used *παρρηται μοι τι*; a thing escapes me, in the sense of neglect; tropically, slips from my mind, to glide by *μήποτε παραρρυῶμεν* (2 aorists passive subjunctive).<sup>286</sup> It appears that the author was using *παραρυῶμεν* as an idiomatic expression considering the classical Greek used by the author.<sup>287</sup> Also, many classical Greek authors wrote using *διὰ τοῦτο*, among other things.<sup>288</sup>

This first verse transitions from the previous chapter, typically translated as such:

*"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."*

This verse is why it has appeared as a warning rather than an appeal. But this "warning" was given using a rhetorical posture, not one of assertion in the affirmative. There appear to be no allusions or quotations from the OT in this verse, but there is one in the following verse, as

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<sup>285</sup> Scholars using rhetorical criticism view the three types of rhetoric as species, see George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 19.

<sup>286</sup> Alexander Buttmann *Ausf. Spr.* ii., 1873, 287; Sophocles *Philoctetes*, LCL, 653; Plato *Laws* 6, 781a.

<sup>287</sup> Multiple scholars have written about Greek idiomatic expressions in the NT, see, G. M. Styler, "Reviews -- Idioms of the Greek New Testament (Biblical Languages: Greek, 2) by Stanley E. Porter." *Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 2 (1993): 673; James A. Kleist, "greek Or Semitic Idiom? a Note on Mt. 21:32." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1946): 192–196. Although research has not found a book on classical Greek idioms in general, a book of Greek Idioms of the NT was found, see Georg Benedikt Winer, *A Grammar of the Idioms of the Greek Language of the New Testament: Scholars Select*. (Philadelphia: T.K & P.G Printers, 1840).

<sup>288</sup> Galen *On Exercise with A Small Ball*, LCL 536, 392-93; Eusebius *Reply to Hierocles*, LCL 458, 230-31) among other things.

discussed in chapter two. As a result, the stronger rhetoric utilized was deliberative rather than Jewish because the later would be more in line with ethical concerns while the former pertains more with utilitarian applications for both communities.

The verse starts with διὰ τοῦτο (*dia touto*), a preposition and a noun combined that indicates either "for this reason" or, in the shorter version, "therefore." Incidentally, according to the rhetorical methodology, the first element is shown where the author states ἡμᾶς (*heymas*) and is inclusive of all those who have heard the message. In contrast, others have argued that it is only implicitly of the Hebrews.<sup>289</sup> But it would be a travesty to believe that the Epistle to the Hebrews would have no applications in the lives of the new believers, so the question must be asked, if that was the case, why would this Epistle be included within the NT canon? As a result, there should be no digression from the topic at hand. The author has himself in those placed situationally in the same position as he is; as a result, they are called the audience. According to the author, they must δεῖ (*dei*), the second element or the action. This verb has a semantic range that conveys: that it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, and is proper for the intended goal. It was not presented as a warning to indicate a peril but as an appeal to show the possibility, which appears using dissuasion or deliberative rhetoric. Coincidentally, to ascertain that the author was warning the readers in this verse, a reader must reach the assertion that he was warning himself. Was he saying that he, too, could drift away? That would be far-fetched to believe, but he included himself rhetorically, as the orators would during this time.

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<sup>289</sup> John MacArthur specifically believes that the author of Hebrews was writing only to Hebrews, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005), 1838. Although this would be congruent with my theory of covenantal position, this would be contradictory in application theology or the pedagogical approach. See Katherine Moloney, "Pedagogy of Social Transformation in the Hebrew Bible: Allowing Scripture to Inform our Interpretive Strategy for Contemporary Application," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1–7.

The second part of the action appears with another verb, *περισσότερως* (*perissoteros*), which all of them have heard and is reflective of the message of salvation. All-encompassing, the author encourages them to a much closer action, as perhaps they have not done so until now. A reader must remember that this time was a time of persecution in the first-century church, and the idea that some may go back to Judaism to prevent or escape prosecution was a real issue. Not the idea that they could somehow lose their newfound freedom in Christ Jesus alone.

The third element or the aim of the verse is to *προσέχειν* (*prosechein*) *pay attention*, as the author made a clear argument in chapter one of the more extraordinary attributes of Jesus. In other words, they will have nothing to fear if they pay attention. The final element or the account in this passage, surprisingly, is not *παρaruōμεν* (*pararruomen*) but *ἀκουσθεῖσιν* (*akoustheisin*), meaning to understand, perceive the sense of what is said, again, referring to the message of salvation but inflicted as an aorist verb.<sup>290</sup>

It appears that the issue has been that many scholars have used warning instead of exhortation because of the first found conjunction *μήποτε* (*meypote*), which by definition has the rhetorical connotation of perhaps whether or not; not a definitive account of what is to happen to them.<sup>291</sup> The same rhetorical usage shows in other verses in the book of Hebrews in Hebrews 2:1; 3:12; 4:1; and 9:17. A further exposition on 4:1 will show next to solidify the thesis against someone losing something emphatically; thus, the need to curtail the usage of warning passage to

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<sup>290</sup> Luke Gorton, "From Hebrew to Greek: Verbs in Translation in the Book of Ecclesiastes," *Open Theology* 2, no. 1 (2016): 405–423.

<sup>291</sup> There is a method of arrangement accounts for the long-observed pattern of alternating epideictic and deliberative units in the book of Hebrews as blocks of narration and argumentation respectively. As a result, the letter may be seen as a conventional speech arranged according to the expectations of ancient rhetoric (exordium, narration, argumentation, peroration), with epideictic comparisons of old and new covenant representatives (narration) repeatedly enlisted in amplification of what may be viewed as the central argument of the speech (argumentation), the recurring deliberative summons for perseverance, see Michael W Martin (Professor of New Testament), and Jason A. Whitlark, *Inventing Hebrews: Design and Purpose in Ancient Rhetoric*, vol. 171 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

express the same. It appears that this conjunction is why the author of Hebrews talked to them, in a speaking manner, including himself, in a rhetorical sense and not in an imperative one by using deliberative rhetoric.<sup>292</sup> He combined his rhetoric in his message.

### **Hebrews 4:1**

#### **Hebrews 4:1-Falls within the Second "Warning Passage," Hebrews 3:7–4:13**

“φοβηθῶμεν οὖν μήποτε καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ  
δοκῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερεῖν”

"Now, let us fear if, while the promise remains in entering His rest, some of you may supposed to have come short of it" (Heb 4:1). Notice a similar usage of the word "promise" in some other classical writings.<sup>293</sup> This metonymy was over-emphasized by the author in his Epistle, and because of Christ, people are now partakers of the heavenly blessings or promise. Also, "if" has been translated as prohibitory conjunction rather than for its rhetorical value. For additional examples of μήποτε used in the same way.<sup>294</sup>

The verse also transitions from the previous chapter, but the author uses a different word altogether, οὖν (*oon*). It has a nuanced semantic range of (then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so); it has been traditionally translated as, "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to

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<sup>292</sup> The term conjunction, as applied herein, comes from the term *conjunto*, which means to join together, and it is important to see that the author was joining prior sentences and not warning them of any impending doom. For an exegetical syntax explanation see Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 667–78. For a comparison of the Greeks moods, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basic*, 446. This conjunction is an inflected version of two words, μή and ποτέ, two independent articles which mean incompleteness.

<sup>293</sup> Demosthenes 519, 8; Aristotle, *eth. Nic.* 10, 1, 1164a, 29; Polybius 1, 43, 6, and often; Diodorus 1, 5; Josephus, *Antiquities* 3, 5, 1; 5, 8, 11; 1 Macc. 10:15.

<sup>294</sup> Julian *Letters*, LCL 157, 294–95; Hermippus *Iambic Fragments*, LCL 259, 516–17; Sannyrion *Testimonia and Fragments*, LCL 515, 222–23; Dio Chrysostom *Discourses* 42, *An Address in His Native City*, LCL 376, 166–67.

reach it." As in the previous verse, there is no allusion nor quotation from the OT within it, only in verse 4, which is not part of this exposition. The author once again includes himself φοβηθῶμεν (*phobeithomen*), as the audience of the appeal, which was done primarily by rhetoricians to obtain a better response to the message.

The implication is that this fear that they might have had was for them to "be careful," which is the action that they must take to prevent "falling short" ὑστερηκέναι (*hystereikenai*) or the aim for each of them, is to reach it by perseverance. The promise of God's rest ἐπαγγελίας (*epangelias*) is the account by which they are not to be afraid. The assurance that God's rest remains, but it appears, based on the Epistle, to be a short period of grace (Heb 3:13).<sup>295</sup> In this sense, there is a shift from "us" to "you" in this verse concerning falling short ὑστερηκέναι (*hystereikenai*) and the author encourages them not to be lacking and having perseverance. Inevitably, a reader must notice that the author places "some" at the peril of not reaching the promise, but it is only to those with no genuine salvation, not those who do. In other words, those who have never belonged to the NCP fall squarely with other biblical teachings in the NT.

Unlike any other scholar, the researcher believes the author uses a typological parallel from the OT in subsequent verses to show progression. This progression would encourage them to see the pattern of disobedience, which could prevent them from entering the promised rest as it did in the past. But it does not appear that he was warning them about losing something since

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<sup>295</sup> This section appears to be a continuation of the interpretation of Psalm 95:7–11, which comes from the preceding chapter concerning the promise of entering God's rest. Again, there seems to be dissimilar opinions as to what the author of Hebrews was intending. See Donald Alfred Hagner, *Encountering the Book of Hebrews: An Exposition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 72; Harold W. Attridge, "'Let Us Strive to Enter that Rest': The Logic of Hebrews 4:1–11," *The Harvard Theological Review* 73, no. 1-2 (1980): 279–288; David A. DeSilva, "Entering God's Rest: Eschatology and the Socio-Rhetorical Strategy of Hebrews," *Trinity Journal* 21, no. 1 (2000): 25–43; R.B. Gaffin, "A Sabbath Rest Still Awaits the People of God," In *Pressing toward the Mark*, ed. C.G. Dennison and R.C. Gamble (Philadelphia: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), 33–51; A.T. Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest and Eschatology in the New Testament," In *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 177–201.

he used the verb δοκῇ (*dokei*), which indicates a supposition or something that it seems rather than something that it is. This verb is inflected to show a subjunctive mood, again suggesting that the author was uncertain. Still, a rhetorical way was probable for this action for those who have not achieved it, so the author gets them there by using dissuasion and exhortation. In this passage, the author frames the colon through a hyperbaton, where a verb and its infinitive complement the frame of the colon.<sup>296</sup> Here, the first word governing the infinitive is not the initial word δοκῇ, but the verb that follows ὑστερηκέναι.

The word "promise" appears here for the first time in the book of Hebrews, but not for the last time. From this point forward, the author emphasizes his central argument that "Christians," whether Jews or Gentiles, are to have a faith that is all about taking up God's promises, including that of rest, which is all done by His Word.<sup>297</sup> This rest is the rest that only God can give. As a result, it is called "My Rest," taken from Psalm 95:11. Please notice that the exact conjunction as in Hebrews 2:1 appears in this verse μήποτε (*meypote*), which again solidifies the rhetorical connotation "if" and not a definitive account of what is to happen to them. The tension comes only to those with no rest or those not in Christ, which many other NT writers speak about in their writings.

Not only in context but because of the expositional tools, it appears that the author was using rhetorical devices rather than warnings to encourage his audience to a place of perseverance in this verse. This finding is not to say that the author was not letting some of them know they did not have genuine faith or rest. Still, a reader cannot say that Hebrews intended

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<sup>296</sup> S. M. Baugh, "Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 59, no. 2 (2017): 206.

<sup>297</sup> A.J. Coetsee, "'By His Word'? Creation, Preservation and Consummation in the Book of Hebrews," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 74, no. 4 (2018): 1–13.

uncertainty for real people like him.<sup>298</sup> Not what other scholars have done in the past, but certainly, the subjunctive mood aimed to show a progression toward something more significant. It can only be plausible because of the High Priest in Jesus, which has created a far superior covenant than before (Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, 12:24). Better things! When the methodology is applied to this verse, the author did not intend to show a change of status; simply, he was asserting that some were not of the faith, which is distinctive and not equal to someone losing their position because of lack of performance. As a result, the author was not using the covenant formulary when he alluded to the OT in verses three and four; he was simply giving an attitudinal connection of better things that emerged within this new covenant or position in Christ for those who are genuine, those now identified in the NCP. This message was rhetoric at its best.

### **Hebrews 4:11**

**Hebrews 4:11-** Falls within the Second "Warning Passage," **Hebrews 3:7–4:13**

“σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς ἀπειθείας”

"Now, let us be diligent in entering His rest so that no one comes under condemnation by following the same example of disobedience" (Heb 4:11). This passage has a contrast in that the Aorist Active Subjunctive text was used in a way that falls under the symbolic, as other classical writers would, phrases that the author of the Epistle attempted to convey and not the accusative form.<sup>299</sup> According to the research, this writing was prolific in classical Greek,

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<sup>298</sup> The differentiation between genuine faith or unbelief was prolific during the biblical writers of the NT. For a study on faith and unbelief, see Daniel T. Julich, "Unbelievers: An Emotional History of Doubt," *Fides Et Historia* 52, no. 2 (2020): 114–116; Larry Rinehart, "Sola Fide: The Mystery of Salvation by Faith," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 49, no. 4 (2014): 577.

<sup>299</sup> WHs Appendix, 164; Tdf. Proleg., 123; Lob. ad Phryn., 724f; Buttmann *Ausf. Spr.* ii., 1873, 277f.

as indicated herein.<sup>300</sup> A reader should pay close to the word πέση and its usage in classical Greek.<sup>301</sup>

Once more, another transition from previous verses, but this time using the same particle οὖν *oon* to bring the audience into focus.<sup>302</sup> It has been traditionally translated as, "Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:11). Again, the author does not use any allusions or quotations in this verse from the OT. As before, the author includes himself in the equation using this οὖν particle. Multiple classical Greek authors used οὖν in their respective writings.<sup>303</sup>

The next element in this verse is the action, which appears using the verb σπουδάσωμεν (*spoudazōmen*), meaning to exert oneself, endeavor, give diligence or strive. In other words, the author encourages everyone, including himself, to be diligent. This verb is inflected to show an aorist active subjunctive in the first-person plural.<sup>304</sup> The covenant formulary of the past would have never used the same format of inclusion as it relates to the people who

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<sup>300</sup> Vergar Romina, "The Shadow Metaphors in Ancient Hebrew Literature and their Semitic and Greek Backgrounds," *Henoch [Torino]* 41, no. 2 (2019): 277–294.

<sup>301</sup> Ion of Chios *Lyric Fragments*, LCL 461, 360–61.

<sup>302</sup> It is important to understand how particles were used by NT writers. See Margaret E. Thrall, *Greek Particles in the New Testament: Linguistic and Exegetical Studies*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 76; Felicia Logozzo, and Paolo Poccetti, *Ancient Greek Linguistics: New Approaches, Insights, Perspectives* (Boston, [Massachusetts]Berlin, [Germany]: De Gruyter, 2017), 103–41. One part of speech that is pervasive in much of Greek is the particle. Particles are words that have a grammatical function but have little meaning on their own. In other words, while nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs all have specific lexical – or dictionary – meanings, particles express grammatical relationships. This grammatical relationship is seen in this verse. It should be abundantly clear that the author was not trying to warn himself of any impending doom as it relates to salvation.

<sup>303</sup> *The Greek Anthology* 3, LCL 67, 166–167; *Asius Elegiac Fragment*, LCL 258, 426–27; Sophocles *Fragments of Elegies*, LCL 461, 332–33.

<sup>304</sup> The usage of an aorist verb and its functions are imperative to understand that generally the action is not done by themselves, but it is done for them or in other words, aorist forms imply that the speaker or writer conceives of the action as a completed whole or wishes to present it as such. This implication is called the *aorist aspect*. The aorist is the verb form used to refer to an action which the speaker or writer presents as complete, and which may require more specific definition in some contexts like in this one, it would make sense that the action is done by the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who belong to the covenantal community. See Buist M Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford [England] New York: Clarendon Press, 1990), 225.

would be outside God's will. This verse has another hyperbaton which is called an interlaced hyperbaton bringing a large division of discourse between two nouns ὑποδείγματι and ἀπειθείας.<sup>305</sup>

For the Jewish people, the idea of entering the κατάπαυσιν (*katapausin*), or as parallel in the OT, was indicated by the word שַׁבָּתון (*shabaton*), is highly appealing to the Hebrews.<sup>306</sup> Regrettably, some scholars doing the exposition of this verse, including DeSilva, do not mention that the author has inflected the verb σπουδάσωμεν (*spoudazōmen*) to show an aorist active subjunctive. This fact would negate the need for the hearer to do this act of entering the rest by themselves as it relates to the κατάπαυσιν (*katapausin*) that they are to pursue. If that were the case, it would be incongruent with the principle established elsewhere in the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 12:2), where the author solidifies the entering of the rest by faith through Jesus—the concept of better things. In other words, the author uses his rhetorical mastery of both cultures (Jewish with morality and Greek with utilitarianism) to achieve this impossible task deliberately.

In this verse, the aim comes in the verb εἰσελθεῖν (*eiselthein*), another aorist verb but this time in the active infinitive. This word may have a symbolic significance. It could mean entrance

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<sup>305</sup> S. M. Baugh, "Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 59, no. 2 (2017): 208.

<sup>306</sup> This is another area of contention for scholars, particularly those of Arminian origin. See David A. DeSilva, "Entering God's Rest: Eschatology and the Socio-Rhetorical Strategy of Hebrews," *Trinity Journal* 21, no. 1 (2000): 25–43 quoting from C.K. Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (ed. W.D. Davies and D. Daube; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 363–93, where DeSilva argues for the apocalyptic elements in the text of Hebrews is a better description of the spatial and temporal aspects of early Christianity. He argues that this spatial or Greek thought and temporal or Jewish thinking brings a greater than argument but distinguished from realized eschatology. DeSilva argues that the author of Hebrews is doing this, in order to obtain the desire emotional response that "will move the hearers toward the path the author wishes them to pursue," but he emphatically denies that the rest spoken about is one that believers can enter at the present time. Moreover, he insists that by placing a very "threshold of rest," the author was stressing the proximity of the goal "the day of rest" and inserts the proviso that the prize is "always" just one step of faithfulness away. In other words, there is no assurance in his argument.

into any condition, state of things, society, or employment. Still, more importantly, they should be of thoughts that come into their minds, which all connect with the account of μή τις (*mei tis*) no one (Heb 3:11). Appealing to each of them to remain faithful, again an exhortation, not a warning. For them to achieve the ultimate rest in Christ and contrasted to the disastrous disobedience of their ancestors in the wilderness where they perished πέσῃ (*pesei*) as they descended from a higher place to a lower one as described in Numbers 14:29.

The analogy in using the OT within the passage would not be to show a pattern of a digression but of progression. This progression relates to the plan of redemption, typologically exemplified by the rest offered in Christ to the people of the NCP. Some contemporary scholars have argued that only those who have achieved all psychological needs would understand this position as God assured them.<sup>307</sup> Perhaps this stance is the same as the warning passages interpreted by the Anti-Eternal Security camps, with the premise that it is up to the individuals to keep their holiness and that someone might lose something. In this case, the Anti-Eternal Security teaching is one of synergism, which appears to contradict the biblical teachings in the entire NT canon. There are, of course, different types of views concerning soteriology.<sup>308</sup> But none apply the rhetorical mastery utilized by the author of Hebrews.

### **Hebrews 4:16**

#### **Hebrews 4:16- Does not fall within any of the Warning Passages**

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<sup>307</sup> Jasmine Timm, Holly Block, Georgeta Boanca, and Hannah E. Acquaye, "An Exploratory Study on the Relationship between Completion of Erikson's Fourth Psychosocial Stage and Assurance of Salvation," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 24, no. 1 (2022;2020;): 53–73.

<sup>308</sup> For some of the types of soteriological studies, see L. Joubert, "Salvation According to the Heidelberg Catechism," *Acta Theologica* 2014, no. sup-0 (2014, 2016;): 99–114; John Rodgers, "Salvation in the Thirty-Nine Articles," *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 1 (2013): 115–124; Will N. Timmins, "A Faith Unlike Abraham's: Matthew Bates on Salvation by Allegiance Alone," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61, no. 3 (2018): 595–615; Vishwa Adluri, and Joydeep Bagchee, "From Poetic Immortality to Salvation: Ruru and Orpheus in Indic and Greek Myth," *History of Religions* 51, no. 3 (2012): 239–261.

“προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν  
εὖρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν”

"Now, let us come with confidence to the gracious throne so that we may receive mercy and grace towards help in time of need" (Heb 4:16). The conjunction οὖν has been translated as "therefore" by many bible translations, which is because it indicates that something follows. Others regard the primary force of the particle as confirmatory or continuative rather than Illative.<sup>309</sup> Hence, it appears in concluding and connecting sentences in ways such as logically, then, accordingly, consequently, these things being so Klotz, Rost, and others have wished to derive the word from the neuter participle ὄν (cf. ὄντως) but, as it applies to classical Greek, the meaning is more exhortatory to show what ought now to be done because of what has been said.<sup>310</sup>

Where therefore in a conclusory sense is done by διὸ καὶ, not οὖν or even by παρ' again, not using οὖν as a conclusory point.<sup>311</sup> Such choices are crucial because in many of the "warning passages," the interpretation presupposes that the author was attempting to make a conclusory remark of retribution. He urged them on what direction to take as they belong to a new covenant through Jesus Christ. This direction is the essence of the argument about the New Covenantal Position in the book of Hebrews. This verse is the first not included by scholars as a warning passage; however, readers will see that it has the same elements as those classified as warning passages. Traditionally, it has been translated in the following way, "Let us then with confidence

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<sup>309</sup> Passow, or Liddell and Scott, under the word; Kühner, § 508, 1 ii., 707ff; Bäumlein, 173ff; Krüger, § 69, 52; Donaldson, 571; Rost in a program Ueber Ableitung, as above, 2; Klotz, 717; Hartung 2:4.

<sup>310</sup> Ananias *Testimonia*, LCL, 501; Philo *On Sobriety*, LCL, 459; Philo on *The Eternity*, LCL, 227.

<sup>311</sup> Some scholars have argued that the Greco-Roman literature appears to be beyond comparison, see Markus Hafner, "Beyond Comparison? Literary Appropriation and its Effects on Post-Augustan Greco-Roman Text Production," *Primerjalna Književnost* 44, no. 2 (2021): 21–37, but that can hardly be the case as there is plenty of literature to compare it to.

draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Again, the author includes himself, along with all the readers, into the same audience spatially and timely with προσερχόμεθα (*proserchometha*), a present verb but a middle subjunctive aspect. He encourages them to act, to come to, approach, and draw near to the aim of a throne seat assigned in the NT to kings, hence, by metonymy, kingly power, or royalty.<sup>312</sup> The account of confidence παρρησίας (*parrēsias*), which has a semantic range of freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, openly, frankly, without concealment, ambiguity, or circumlocution, brings the entire verse into context. They now have something new and different that they did not have before.<sup>313</sup> The author uses a powerful allusion to the OT.

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<sup>312</sup> The phrase, throne of grace, is parallel to the language of the Day of Atonement when the High Priest presented the offering on the mercy seat כִּסֵּא הַרַחֲמִים or ἱλαστήριον (Heb 9:5), on the ark of the covenant where God was not only expected but understood to be present. This mercy and grace are to be obtained by Christ Jesus in faith (Heb 7:25; 10:22), which is done only by the Holy Spirit. Christ's sacrifice Himself brought about a change from God's throne of judgment into the throne of grace as indicated by this verse. See Tremper Longman, and David E. Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Revised ed. vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 73; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005), 1846; F. J. Huegel, *The Cross of Christ-The Throne of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1965); Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse*, vol. 142 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). This last author presents that Christ's exaltation was described as a heavenly journey that culminated in his enthronement on the divine throne of glory. Christian writers did exploit the symbolic world, the images and metaphors of Second Temple Judaism. He continues explaining that the exaltation discourse that they present, however, is completely new. Moreover, he indicated that a simple typological explanation is unable to explain the nature of early Christology. Christ was not depicted as a heavenly angelic figure or an exalted patriarch. He was described as the enthroned Son of God whose reign is eternal. As a result, he argues that the exalted Christ on the throne of Glory was not considered merely as a pious Jew making a heavenly journey, but as the divine Savior of the world. The intertextual transformation of Jewish concepts underlined the Lordship of Christ as a heavenly king. The confessing of Christ as Lord realized simultaneously the core of traditional Jewish devotion - faith in and faithfulness to God as a heavenly King. Other books that further explain this are Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008); Vasile Birzu, "The Throne of God as a Prototype of Primacy in the Church and in Creation," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019): 1–6; Thomas H. McNeal, "The Throne of God," *The Texas Review (Austin)* 7, no. 4 (1922): 265–67; E Borowski, "Cherubim: God's Throne?" *The Biblical Archaeology Review* 21, no. 4 (1995): 36–41.

<sup>313</sup> Notice that some themes found in ancient Jewish accounts of the heavenly throne room appear in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Motifs such as the throne of God, the temple veil, the glory of God, which are abundant in the Epistle. A contrast exists when reviewed. Though in ancient Jewish texts they are all depicted as presenting nearly insurmountable obstacles for any of them to achieve to get to the presence of God, the author of Hebrews transforms these conceptions, and instead depicts them as encouraging, facilitating, and even ensuring access to a welcoming God. See Scott D. Mackie, "Ancient Jewish Mystical Motifs in Hebrews' Theology of Access and Entry Exhortations," *New Testament Studies* 58, no. 1 (2012): 88–104.

It appears that in the OT, the high priest was the only person allowed to enter or approach the כִּסֵּא (*kis-say'*), as found in Leviticus 16:2-34 and now shown as θρόνον (*throno*), which makes this verse having an allusion to that fact that the Jewish people should have known. However, the author emphasizes not the reality of the inability of Jewish people to enter but the new ability to enter or approach the throne τῆς χάριτος (*teis charistos*) so that ἵνα (*hina*), a powerful conjunction to show a demonstrative idea of something new and unbeknown to all of them, ἔλεος καὶ χάριν mercy and grace can be accomplished. But only available to them because of the concept of better things in Christ, not because of their righteousness. As a result, it appears that the author of Hebrews used this concept of better things to indicate their new attitudinal position within the NCP.

### **Hebrews 6:1**

#### **Hebrews 6:1- Falls within the Third "Warning Passage," Hebrews 5:11–6:12**

“διὸ ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν”

"Wherefore, forgive the elementary teaching about the Christ; let us press on to maturity, not laying the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God again" (Heb 6:1)."

The use of διὸ was used in classical Greek to express contrast, not necessarily a conclusion statement.<sup>314</sup> A derivative phrase from the word ἀφέντες used by ἀφίετε, καὶ ἀφεθήσεται to express the concept to forgive.<sup>315</sup> Also, can be seen the prolific usage of ἀφέντες in biblical accounts and contemporary classical Greek writings.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Philo, *The Special Laws*, 35.

<sup>315</sup> Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*, 334–335.

<sup>316</sup> Callimachus, *Hymns 6. To Demeter*, LCL 129, 128–29; Libanius *Oration 48. To the City Council*, LCL 452, 434–35; *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, LCL 24, 390–91.

Another transition with the word διὸ (*dio*) is another conjunction signifying wherefore, on account of, or therefore.<sup>317</sup> "Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God" (Heb 6:1 ESV) again. The author is part of the audience again. In action, the author wants everyone to leave ἀφέντες (*aphentes*) or to send away, going away or depart, used in an exhortative manner, and notice that the verb is once again inflected as an aorist participle. The same could be true about the conjunctions used by the author of Hebrews as indicated by Steiner, relating to Hebrew conjunctions, *supra*. In other words, they could have many meanings.

It appears that the author was alluding to the former ways in which the Jewish people obtained repentance, which was, by all definitions, dead works or νεκρῶν ἔργων (*nekron ergon*), a thing of the past. Here, the covenant formulary used in the OT does not have the same application to the people of the NCP. This appeal aims to reach maturity τελειότητα (*teleioteita*), as it relates to teachings found in Christ τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον (*tou Christou logon*) or the account by which they are now to be held accountable. Because of the concept of better things, the author was conveying a new position for the people of God, and this passage shows the progression of the process. This passage contrasts the old covenant of works and the new covenant of grace.<sup>318</sup> The rhetoric used accomplishes this message ethically and is functional.

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<sup>317</sup> Richard C Steiner, "Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction -ו have Many Meanings, One Meaning, or No Meaning at All?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, no. 2 (2000): 249.

<sup>318</sup> This contrast can be viewed by the different positions by scholars. See Dinu Moga, "John Murray, and James B. Torrance on Covenant Theology," *Perichoresis (Oradea)* 17, no. 1 (2019): 91–117; Aaron Clay Denlinger, "Robert Rollock on Covenant and Sacrament: Two Texts," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 15, no. 2 (2013): 199–211; Martin Kavka, "The Perils of Covenant Theology: The Case of Eugene Borowitz," *Journal of Jewish Ethics* 1, no. 1 (2015): 92–113; M. McGriffert, "From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19(2), (1988), 131–155; Guy Prentiss Waters, *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020); Stanley J Rodes, *From Faith to Faith: John Wesley's Covenant Theology and the Way of Salvation* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014); Herman C. Hanko, *God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Pub. Association, 1988).

It appears that the author was showing this dichotomy to show the better things they had, as covenantal people, in the promises of Christ, which they never had before. The phrase νεκρῶν ἔργων (*necron ergon*) will come back again (Heb 9:14) is descriptive of what is left behind with true worship of the living God. Better things show the contrast between Christ's sacrifice and the incomplete OT animal sacrifices that were unable to take away the sin of the people, which presupposes that these dead works are useless past rituals.

Since Christ's sacrifice is independent of anyone's righteousness, why would the author indicate that they would go backward instead of forward now in Christ? The author emphasizes with his rhetorical approach not that they are dead as people but that the rituals are dead and unable to bring anyone the freedom obtained through Christ. Not from the sacrifices of the OT, which vanished, but to show that works cannot earn eternal life. A powerful indication that the author encourages them to achieve the new attitudinal position in Christ, not their old traditional works of the law.<sup>319</sup> Notably, the author used a form of idiomatic expression called apposition within this verse.<sup>320</sup> The author did not add the apposition word to the noun in this case. The author resolved it with an independent clause, "διὸ ἀφέντες," which would have indicated that authorities were corrected in the past when the elementary teaching disappeared for the new goal of maturity τελειότητα, which shows progression, not regression.

### **Hebrews 10:22**

**Hebrews 10:22-** Falls within the Fourth "Warning Passage," **Hebrews 10:19–39**

“προσερχόμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως ῥεραντιζόμενοι

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<sup>319</sup> Michael Dormandy, "'Works of the Law' in the Perspective of Second-Century Reception, Written by Matthew J. Thomas," *Novum Testamentum* 64, no. 1 (2021): 136–137; Thomas D. McGlothlin, "Matthew J. Thomas. Paul's 'Works of the Law' in the Perspective of Second Century Reception," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 14, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>320</sup> Winer, *A Grammar of the Idioms of the Greek Language of the New Testament*, 284.

τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ”

"Let us subdue after a sincere heart with full faith assurance having hearts sprinkled clean of evil things, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). Rhetoricians expressed the concept of subduing in classical Greek to show supernatural forces involved.<sup>321</sup> This concept is not something done by itself. The author of Hebrews was not expecting that from the audience; as a result, translations that hope the person to "draw near" on their own miss the mark. Also, the word as inflicted προσερχόμεθα was only used in the book of Hebrews twice, both with a Present Middle Subjunctive function.

In classical Greek, only two authors used the same word.<sup>322</sup> All these classical Greek renditions indicate some sort of help in the drawing nearby, which prevents the contradictory doctrine of synergism that the *Anti-Eternal Security* campus focuses on so much.<sup>323</sup> This submission is made for people by the Holy Spirit; it is not individual doings but presented masterfully in a rhetorical deliberative way using exhortation. This verse uses the combination word for "let us." Still, this time appears in the verb προσερχόμεθα (*proserchometha*) or "let us draw near," or as the translators traditionally translate as, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). In other words, the same word covers the audience and the action. As discussed, two critical quotations are within this warning passage from the OT prophets, Isaiah 26:20 and Habakkuk 2:3. But there is no direct quotation but an allusion to Ezekiel 11:19 and Jeremiah 31:33.

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<sup>321</sup> Philo on *Giants*, LCL, 462–463; Dio Cassius *Roman History*, LCL175, 22–23.

<sup>322</sup> Philo *On the Giants*, LCL, 227, 462–63; and Dio Cassius *Roman History*, LCL175, 22–23.

<sup>323</sup> Michael Questier, "Arminianism, Catholicism, and Puritanism in England during the 1630s," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (2006): 53–78.

There is an implication of a personal connection between God and His people in that the person is to come to, approach, or assent to where there is present consent.<sup>324</sup> This goal is the goal of freedom through Christ (Heb 4:16; 7:25; 10:1). This exhortation aimed to let them see that they had full assurance, or most certain confidence πληροφορία (*pleirophoria*) by using a dative case, indicative of personal interest.<sup>325</sup> The account in this passage is that they are to have clean hearts ἀληθινῆς καρδίας (*aleithineis kardias*), which is their newfound identity in Christ, a term herein referred to as NCP based on OT prophecy now fulfilled in Christ.

In contrast to this exhortation, there was the reality of the qualifications of those who were to live in God's presence (Psalm 24:3–6). Notice that there are now four phrases to show those privileged to do so. The first two reveal the contemporary idea of a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, indicative of a personal open and transparent genuineness towards God because of faith, required to approach God (Heb 11:6). A second phrase is a balancing act of cleansing between heart and body with pure water ὕδατι καθαρῷ (*hudati katarow*), an adjective combined with a noun. The balancing act comes in metaphorically contrasting the purification of heart and body.<sup>326</sup> None of the Bible versions available today have made this nuanced distinction within their respective interpretations.

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<sup>324</sup> The implication is that in the OT, only the High Priest was to go into the presence of God but now, the author of Hebrews is explicitly indicating that they too had this ability through Jesus' sacrifice. See Benjamin J. Ribbens, "The Sacrifice God Desired: Psalm 40.6–8 in Hebrews 10," *New Testament Studies* 67, no. 2 (2021): 284–304; Simon J. Joseph, "'In the Days of His Flesh, He Offered Up Prayers': Reimagining the Sacrifice(s) of Jesus in the Letter to the Hebrews," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 140, no. 1 (2021): 207–227.

<sup>325</sup> For an explanation on the dative case see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 137–75; Joanne Vera Stolk, "Dative Alternation and Dative Case Syncretism in Greek: The use of Dative, Accusative and Prepositional Phrases in Documentary Papyri," *Transactions of the Philological Society* 115, no. 2 (2017): 212–238.

<sup>326</sup> This is done supernaturally, see Richard D. Nelson, "He Offered Himself: Sacrifice in Hebrews," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 57, no. 3 (2003): 251–265.

### Hebrews 10:26

**Hebrews 10:26-** Falls within the Fourth "Warning Passage," **Hebrews 10:19–39**

“ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκέτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία”

"For if we go on sinning voluntarily after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer smaller sacrifices for sins." The word ἐκουσίως signifies something that people do voluntarily or that people have control over.<sup>327</sup> The term ἀπολείπεται was used in classical Greek to show something smaller or least, not to remain.<sup>328</sup> The issue is that the same word appears only three times in the book of Hebrews, as inflicted, and the translators use the more common form, not the classical Greek rendition discussed above.

The translators have, therefore, erroneously translated this verse, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (Heb 10:26, ESV). The author includes himself as part of the audience during the supposed transgression, which would beg whether he doubted his faith. The action shows continual action ἁμαρτανόντων (*hamartanonton*) to be without a share in, to miss the mark, to err, or be mistaken but with the aim of ἐκουσίως (*hekousiōs*) or willfully, an adverb that indicates a settled course of deliberate sins, which criminal law calls *Mens Rea*.<sup>329</sup> *Mens Rea* is tacitly opposed to sins

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<sup>327</sup> Plato *Hippias Minor*, LCL, 466–467.

<sup>328</sup> Lucian, *The Fly*, LCL, 82–83; Hippocrates of Cos, *Law*, LCL, 262–263.

<sup>329</sup> There is a subtle difference between the actus rea and the mens rea as seen in Erica Beecher-Monas, and Edgar Garcia-Rill, "Actus Reus, Mens Rea, and Brain Science: What do Volition and Intent really Mean?" *Kentucky Law Journal* 106, no. 2 (2017): 265. In this sense, Mens Rea is the mental element of a person's intention to commit a crime; or knowledge that one's action or lack of action would cause a crime to be committed. It is a necessary element of many crimes. This is the severity that the author of Hebrews attaches this continual adverb. For an excellent explanation of these two elements see Stephen P. Garvey, *Guilty Acts, Guilty Minds* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), where the author differentiates between actus rea and mens rea. In his book *Guilty Acts, Guilty Minds*, the author proposes an understanding of mens rea and actus reus as limits on the authority of a state, and in particular the authority of a democratic state, to ascribe guilt through positive law to those accused of crime. Actus reus and mens rea are necessary conditions, among others, for the legitimacy, as distinct from the

committed inconsiderately and from ignorance or weakness. In other words, the author encouraged them not to sin, not warning them against sinning or the consequences, while showing Christ's finality or at least the lesser sacrifice performed by rituals would not suffice now. Finally, the account is the τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας (*tein epignosin teis aleitheias*) as means by which they embrace Christ's sacrifice as means of freedom.

The suggestion is that instead of apostasy, as many scholars have suggested, the author of Hebrews was using a primary pronoun in ἡμῶν (*heiomon*), and he certainly was not referring to apostasy but rather a rhetorical stance to show his intended purpose of the appeal and new position in Christ. The same is true of other classical Greek writings.<sup>330</sup> To argue otherwise would be counterintuitive to the goal of the Epistle and would imply that apostasy is the *unpardonable sin* spoken about, for which Christ's sacrifice would not suffice now. It appears that this doctrine is not what the canon teaches nor what the author of Hebrews intended. Although some scholars have taken that position, it must be ruled a mistake by those who follow this scholarship. Dissuasion and exhortation emerge simultaneously to accomplish a message.

There is a difference in approach between other NT writers and the book of Hebrews concerning the devices used in writing. Generally, rhetoric was not what other authors of the NT had in mind, but other NT writers, for example, in James 5:19–20), speak of this πλανηθῆναι (*planeithei*). Interestingly, the same person can come back ἐπιστρέψῃ (*epistrephei*), which the author of Hebrews does not mention since he includes himself in the equation of the possibility of sinning in a ἐκούσιως (*hekousios*) or willful manner.<sup>331</sup> Again, during this Hellenistic period,

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justice, of state punishment. In the same sense, the author of Hebrews is using this adverb to show a deprived mind, which is not what Christians show after conversion but the opposite (10:39).

<sup>330</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, LCL 265, 442–43; Polycarp *Letter*, LCL 24, 332–33; Clement *Letter*, LCL 24, 150–51; Isaeus *on Behalf of Euphiletus*, LCL 202, 432–33.

<sup>331</sup> A particular scholar has mentioned that there is a possibility with the way in which the author of Hebrews has chosen to give exhortation that there are two areas of concern, first, the blessings of the covenant that

the author of Hebrews used Greek and Hebrew rhetoric to accomplish his dramatic presentation of their NCP.

### **Hebrews 12:1**

**Hebrews 12:1-** Does not fall within any of the Warning Passages

“τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἀμαρτίαν δι’ ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα”

"And then, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." The phrase τοιγαροῦν καὶ appears to be used sporadically in classical Greek as a continuation, which seems to be what the author of Hebrews was doing. It is the second verse that is not part of the original warning passages.<sup>332</sup> Like many of the other verses, this verse starts again, bringing a transition with another article τοιγαροῦν (*toigaroun*), and it all means wherefore then, for which reason, therefore, consequently.

In this verse (Heb 12:1), the translators have translated it like this, "And then, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

It appears that scholars have mistaken the elements.<sup>333</sup> Again, the author, on the one hand,

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the members of the covenant can expect to receive and second, the curses of the covenant that likewise members of the covenant can receive based on unfaithfulness. See Matthew McAfee, "Covenant and the Warnings of Hebrews: The Blessing and the Curse," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 3 (2014): 537. He goes further to assert that the warning passages of Hebrews speak of covenant blessings and curses in a significant manner, using Numbers 15:2 for the high-handed sins that the author of Hebrews must have been alluding to. He wrongfully concludes in my opinion that the author of Hebrews was addressing spiritually dead individuals because of the high-handed sin committed by them, even though they were part of the covenantal community. This appear to be a circular argument or a *non sequitur* one.

<sup>332</sup> Lucian *Dialogues of the Dead*, LCL, 104–105.

<sup>333</sup> These elements are the distinction between the covenant formulary of the OT and the elements first described by McKnight. Although McKnight does not implicitly call them the covenant formulary, because of the retributory aspects of the elements, they must be categorized as such. This is one of the distinctions that we must make in the writings of the author of Hebrews.

includes himself in the audience with the same pronoun, unlike the covenant formulary, which never had the author of the warning.

On the other hand, the action is ἀποθέμενοι (*apothēmenoi*) or lay aside but notice once again the step is in the aorist verb tense. The aim is not the sin that clings so closely but the run with endurance δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχουμε (*dia hupomoneis trechome*), which is the exhortation for them to persevere. This word ὑπομονῆς (*hupomoneis*), was used by classical Greek writers, the same as the author of Hebrews.<sup>334</sup> The account is the cloud of witness νέφος μαρτύρων (*nephos marturon*), two nouns put together by the author in a symbolic way.<sup>335</sup> In addition, the author uses an allusion in this metaphor to the giants of the faith in the OT.

This metaphor alludes to the solidarity that the Christian faith is to have, as apparent by the same faithful people observed throughout the ages (Heb 11:1–40). They are witnesses, although not ones that are alive, but ones that have demonstrated through their lives and deaths that faith in God is the essential part of the covenantal family for which they have been commanded (Heb 11:2, 4, 5, 39). The exhortation indicates that failing to complete a race could bring personal disappointment and public disgrace, for which the author encouraged them to remember those before them.

The concept of race and a race with endurance ὑπομονῆς τρέχουμεν (*hupomoneis trechomen*) shows that the author had the faith that believers needed to achieve the goal. In the

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<sup>334</sup> Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free*, LCL 363, 24–25; Basil, *Letters*, LCL 215, 188–89; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, LCL 153, 438–39; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.1 Zeno, LCL 185, 228–29.

<sup>335</sup> For a description of this type of metaphorical usage see Frederick W Danker, Walter Bauer, and William F. Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 670; Mason D Lancaster, "Metaphor Research and the Hebrew Bible," *Currents in Biblical Research* 19, no. 3 (2021): 235–285; Shmuel Bolozy, "Metaphors in Hebrew Slang, and their Parallels in Hebrew Literature and in the Sources," *Hebrew Studies* 48, no. 1 (2007): 269–290; Christian A Eberhart, and Donald Schweitzer, "The Unique Sacrifice of Christ According to Hebrews 9: A Study in Theological Creativity," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 10, no. 1 (2019): 47.

NT, several references to athletic races (1 Cor 9:24–27; Gal 2:2; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7) denote a significant long-distance footrace they were about to embark on. During the second temple Judaism, it appears that the athletes would try to remove everything that would keep them heavy, thus eliminating excess weight was a plausible explanation by the author of Hebrews of the things that could easily *εὐπερίστατον* (*euperistaton*) them.<sup>336</sup> Similarly, a Christian with excess weight may have issues with race. One that the author of Hebrews was familiar with and was exhorting them about concerning sin, evildoers, and suffering.

### **Hebrews 12:28**

**Hebrews 12:28-** Falls within the Fifth "Warning Passage," **Hebrews 12:14–29**

“διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχωμεν χάριν δι’ ἧς λατρεύομεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους”

"On account of the unshaken kingdom we receive, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer an acceptable service with reverence and awe to God." Most translations indicate a kingdom that cannot be shaken, but this writing does not show the negative. The classical Greeks take on a different shape with the word ἀσάλευτον when it comes to unshaken things.<sup>337</sup> Here, the author of Hebrews used the same adjective to describe the kingdom of God, and people do not see the usage of this word anywhere else in the scriptures.<sup>338</sup>

In this verse, the translators have rendered, "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence

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<sup>336</sup> George Eisen, "A Centennial Love Story: Jewish Athletes, Past and Present, have a Strong History of Competition, Filled with Tragedy and Triumph," *Baltimore Jewish Times* 230, no. 1 (1996): 54.

<sup>337</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, LCL, 61–80; Plutarch, *Lives. Demetrius*, LCL 101, 18–19. Euripides *Bacchae*, LCL, 495, 44–45.

<sup>338</sup> For a study of word for word usage in the Bible see, Paul V. Mankowski, "Word for Word," *First Things* (New York, N.Y.) no. 295 (2019): 1–8.

and awe," indicative of the pattern of persuasion used by him. When the exposition insinuates that something *cannot*, it gives the wrong idea of the possibility of someone trying to move something that would be impossible to do. Thus, the classical Greeks make this distinction by not using the negative form of the verb. Again, he includes himself in the audience. The author alludes to the aspects of worship, particularly one acceptable as contrasted to the OT worship based on sacrifices. This service, or אָבָד (*awbad*) appears in Deuteronomy 6:13; Deuteronomy 10:12; Joshua 24:15, among others.<sup>339</sup>

The action comprises a feminine noun and a verb ἔχωμεν χάριν (*echomen chari*). This life appears in terms of giving thanks as an idiom, which is acceptable worship or the aim of those in the covenantal family. The author reassured the Hebrews that the kingdom inaugurated by Christ provides security to the believer in all circumstances. This kingdom is the account, or a kingdom that cannot be shaken βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον (*basileian asaleuton*) is a fruit of a new covenant, not of the old one.<sup>340</sup> The word worship λατρεύωμεν (*latreuōmen*) or service is a

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<sup>339</sup> For a comparison on the forms and type of worship between the OT and the NT see Paul Burns, "Touching the Altar: The Old Testament for Christian Worship," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 31, no. 1 (2009): 80-82. The typical OT worship was described by Mladen Popović, "Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 41, no. 3 (2010): 384-385, and for elements of OT worship, see John D. Watts, "Elements of Old Testament Worship," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XXVI, no. 3 (1958): 217-221; B. R. S., "Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 422), Ed. by John Day," *Heythrop Journal* 49, no. 1 (2008): 168-168; William Rainey Harper, "Constructive Studies in the Priestly Element in the Old Testament II, The History of Worship in the Earlier Old Testament Period," *The Biblical World* 17, no. 2 (1901): 121-134.

<sup>340</sup> The first scholar to mention a fruit of a covenant is Donald A. Hagner. See Hagner, *Encountering the Book of Hebrews: An Exposition*, 166. Other scholars make the point of been made perfect in Christ. See D.R. Black, "A Note on the Structure of Hebrews 12:1-2," *Biblica* 68 (1978): 543-51; G. B. Gaird, "Just Men Made Perfect," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 35 (1966): 47-73; N.C. Croy Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1-13 in its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Contexts. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 98. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); W. J. Dumbrell, "The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect," *Evangelical Quarterly* 48 (1976): 154-59; P. Ellingworth, "New Testament Text and Old Testament Context in Heb. In *Studia Biblica* 3, ed. E.A. Livingston. Sheffield: JSOT Press, (1980): 89-96; P.R. Jones, "A Superior Life: Hebrews 12:3-13:25," *Review and Expositor* 82 (1985): 391-405; J.W. Thompson, "That Which Cannot Be Shaken: Some Metaphysical Assumptions in Hebrews," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 580-87.

technical word implicating service used in the OT for priestly service, suggesting that Christian worship fulfills temple service.

Interestingly, a final shaking is of no threat to Christians since this kingdom cannot be shaken (v. 28), which has implications that it will endure forever. There is a tension, which vanishes by applying the proper tense of the participle receiving, and the inflected form found in verse παραλαμβάνοντες (*paralambanonte*), indicative of something that they have already received and not something that is still to come. Most scholars, however, find this tension to point to an eschatological event.<sup>341</sup> However, readers must recognize that the fruit of the new covenant Christ brought is security in this new NCP.

### **Hebrews 13:13**

**Hebrews 13:13-** Does not fall within any of the Warning Passages

“τοίνυν ἐξερχώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες”

"Rather, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bringing His righteousness." The word τοίνυν was prolific within the classical arena, where it appeared as a contrast.<sup>342</sup> This idiomatic expression "outside the camp" is not about holy places but the unclean world, which is to conduct actions like Christ did. This idiom is an exhortation argument made by the author that shows the Superiority of Christ, not some abilities to bear His reproach. The word ὀνειδισμὸν in classical Greek appeared to denote righteousness (John Damascene, *Barlaam, and Ioasaph*, p. 152-153), but translators have used it to show reproach, which Jesus carried. Still, not everyone

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<sup>341</sup> Scholars have called this phenomenon participatory eschatology see Danie J. Dreyer, "Participatory Eschatology: A Challenge for Dualistic and Non-Dualistic Thinking." *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 41, no. 1 (2020): 1–6; Allen, *Eschatology and Exhortation in Hebrews*, 192–193; Jihye Lee, "The Unshakable Kingdom through the Shaking of Heaven and Earth in Heb 12:26–29." *Novum Testamentum* 62, 2020 no. 3 (2020): 257–272.

<sup>342</sup> Plutarch, *Morali, On Envy and Hate*, LCL, 538–539; Demosthenes, *Orations*, LCL, 46; Apollodorus, *Against Stephanus, Charged with False Testimony* 2, LCL 346, 250–51; Lysias 7, *Before the Aereopagus: The Matter of the Olive-Stump*, LCL 244, 154–55; Isaeus 12, *On Behalf of Euphiletus*, LCL 202, 434–35.

in the Jewish culture agrees.<sup>343</sup> This message would be incompatible with what the author attempted to convey unless the same appeared simultaneously using Jewish ethical and Greek deliberative rhetoric.

The above is the last verse that scholars have not designated as a warning passage. This final verse that appears to show the same common elements states, "Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured" (Heb 13:13). Perhaps the author was alluding to the Israelites in the OT when he mentioned outside the camp as in Exodus 29:14; Exodus 19:15. As it is typical with the author of Hebrews, he starts with particle τοίνυν (*toinun*), a transition from his previous pericope. Again, the author himself is part of the appeal. The audience and action can be seen together again in the word ἐξερχόμεθα (*exerchometha*) with mention of the place out of which one goes or the point from which he departs, and in this case, He is referring to Christ.

The aim is found in the compositive phrase ὀνειδισμόν αὐτοῦ φέροντες (*oneidismōn autou pherontes*), another verb combined with a noun. The account was πρὸς αὐτὸν (*pros auton*), a preposition, and pronoun indicating to follow Him, or Christ, outside, which was a metaphor for how the Jewish religious establishment treated the unclean outside the camp, and now the readers of the Epistle are found in the same position.<sup>344</sup> A reader can see that this is the second verse from the ten selected that is not part of any scholar's use of the phrase, warning passage.

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<sup>343</sup> For an interesting perspective of non-Christian Jewish on Jesus, see Steven H. Golden, "A Jewish Perspective of Jesus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 34, no. 2 (2004): 54–68.

<sup>344</sup> The corollary between the OT treatment of unclean as going outside and the NT treatment by the book of Hebrews can be examined further. See J.A. Sanders, "Outside the Camp," *Union Seminary Quarterly* 24 (1969) 239–46; L. Saunders, "Outside the Camp: Hebrews 13," *Restoration Quarterly* 22 (1979): 19–24; T.C. Smith, "An Exegesis of Hebrews 13:1–17," *Faith and Mission* 7 (1989): 70–78; A. Snell, "We Have an Altar," *Reformed Theological Review* 23 (1964): 16–23; J.W. Thompson, "Outside the Camp: A Study of Heb 13:9–14," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 53–63; P. Walker, "Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:9–14," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994): 39–72.

Figuratively or symbolically, the author conveys that a believer must join Him outside the camp of the world by no longer being part of the practices and rituals that lead to unholiness. At the same time, the author depicted the end of a Levitical system, which by default is the same system of being outside the camp of OT covenantal law instead of inside with a personal relationship with Christ. Again, the author was prompting them toward a better position in Christ rather than warning them about possibly losing this new covenantal position.<sup>345</sup>

The author uses παρεμβολῆς (*paremboleis*), and it appears that the meaning coincides with the term outside the city. Many times, the author has repeated that their faith aimed so that they could endure His reproach ὀνειδισμὸν (*oneidismōn*). This reproach or noun accompanied a verb in the present active participle φέροντες (*pherontes*), indicative of a current state but noticed the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ (*autou*), which makes it all different because this reproach is His, not like the OT ones.

The hope is that this chapter has given a new perspective with the optimistic view that the author of Hebrews had on this new covenant inaugurated by Christ. Considering this new covenant and the Superiority of Christ, it appears that the author of the Book of Hebrews encouraged them to a better relationship—one of a personal nature, rather than warning them about the one they had in the OT. Because the author understood how to use both the Jewish

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<sup>345</sup> For an explanation of the view of people of the covenant see James Brashler, "Abraham and the Covenant People," *Presbyterian Outlook* (Richmond, VA) 199, no. 13 (2017): 48; Michael Kok, "The True Covenant People: Ethnic Reasoning in the Epistle of Barnabas," *Studies in Religion* 40, no. 1 (2011): 81–97; David Allen, "Scripture, Covenant and the Letter to the Hebrews: Gregory W. Lee, Today when You Hear His Voice: Scripture, the Covenants and the People of God" *Expository Times* 128, no. 9 (2017): 460–61; Timothy Escott, "Today when You Hear His Voice: Scripture, the Covenants, and the People of God, Gregory W. Lee, Eerdmans," *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 25, no. 3 (2018): 521–23; Mark S. Kinzer, "Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity," *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 20, no. 4 (2013): 592–594.

ethical rhetoric of the time and the deliberative rhetoric used in classical Greek oratory—the author asserted that Christ accomplished this.

Similarly, the author includes himself as a person to be warned, let alone to be in sin and trouble of "apostasy," making it clear that the author's intention could not have been discouragement of losing newfound freedom. Instead, believers could only find assurance in their new NCP. As the benefactor, only Christ could have accomplished in the new covenant what the old covenant could not because of the synergy required.<sup>346</sup> The author of Hebrews used both types of rhetoric so that there could be no doubt in their minds about the new standing they enjoy in Christ because of the new covenant in Him.

### Summary

This chapter summarized personal current exposition of the book of Hebrews. It also explained the applicational commentary to the Book of Hebrews and the phonological description of the Book of Hebrews. It covered some of the idiomatic expressions found within this Epistle. Next, the researcher discussed the different Bible translations to show the Odyssey that this book has endured. The researcher presented a personal outline of the book of Hebrews to show movement. Then, the research discussed the ten selected verses within the Book of Hebrews, and the chosen passages' rationale was covered. The study addressed the reason for selecting shorter verses of the warning passages and covered an explanation of rhetorical criticism.

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<sup>346</sup> For an explanation of the synergism spoken about in this chapter, see Pieter G. R. de Villiers, "The Role of Theology in the Interpretation of the Bible: Towards a Synergy between Theological and Historical Approaches to Biblical Studies," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 1–9; Michael McGiffert, "Herbert Thorndike and the Covenant of Grace," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58, no. 3 (2007): 440–460.

The exposition of Hebrews 2:1, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:11, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 10:26, Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 12:28, and Hebrews 13:13 followed the chapter to bring its culmination. The exposition and the translation were personal and thus may be subject to debate. The approach considered the rhetorical nature of the Epistle, the socio-linguistic methodology, both ethical and practical applications during the exposition, and most importantly, the direction or journey that the author took its audience within the Epistle. It appears that both cultures were exhorted accordingly.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

The scholarship on the book of Hebrews appears to have a never-ending spiral. It lands expositors on either side of a spectrum—without the benefits of a neutral position. This spectrum is not linear; instead, much closer to a sphere, a cycle, or an infinity loop. The author of Hebrews never intended this penumbra of interpretation, where a reader had to land on a dangerous spot. As a result, the impetus for this research was to find a neutral position in which the text, and not theological posturing, was the result. Coincidentally, a new methodology had to emerge. A methodology that would consider the atmosphere of first-century biblical writings, thus, attaining the correct interpretation within the spectrum or sphere.

The hope has been that with this exposition, viewed in its proper rhetorical way, there would be a filling up of the existing gap concerning interpreting the "warning passages" in the book of Hebrews. Rhetorically speaking, exhortations were never meant to divest anyone of anything.<sup>347</sup> Because of the rhetorical nature of the Epistle, it would be entirely possible that the author was not warning or relieving them but dissuading them when it came to the things that have separated the people of God from the presence of God—their direction.

Since Christ was the bridge between the old and the new, what better way to present this fact than simultaneously using the rhetoric of the time, with its Jewish and Greek flavors. The people during this time were more apt to understand this usage properly. Because of the time elapsed since the biblical author delivered the original message, there has been a loss in translation of these two cultures' understanding of these passages. Logically, a better thing

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<sup>347</sup> As used herein, the concept of divesting is one of separation or no longer participation within the constructs of an agreement, see Michael Hugo, and Loretta Schmitz. "Divest from Israel," *National Catholic Reporter* 50, no. 17 (2014): 27.

cannot vanish by the imperfect actions on the part of the clients or by improper interpretation of the expositor.

### **In the Beginning**

The dissertation began with the problems that have alluded to many regarding interpreting the book of Hebrews. The usage of these perverse "warning passages" were identified. One of the main problems has been that the book appeared using classical Greek, which perhaps was the culprit for naming the "warning passages," using the wrong genre of rhetoric in such a way.<sup>348</sup> The exposition showed a different and distinct usage of classical Greek and how the author of Hebrews used a pattern to show his exposition and exhortation to the community of faith, a community called the NCP.

The predictions were that the infamous use of "warning passages" needed to be curtailed from scholarship, and this research appears to have done that. Therefore, the author of Hebrews was prolific in using rhetorical devices, but only in the form of deliberative rhetoric, thereby showing a new direction and policy decision. This type of direction from the rhetorical author appears to be what other rhetorical writers used as well. The author of Hebrews used deliberative rhetoric from beginning to end in his Epistle.

### **Biblical References**

The researcher examined the biblical canon. All while explaining some pertinent pericopes in the book of Hebrews. The study showed that "there were over 980 direct quotations

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<sup>348</sup> It is well known that the book of Hebrews was written in a more classical way than any other of the books of the NT, see S. M. Baugh, "Greek Periods in the Book of Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 60, no. 1 (2018): 24–44; S. M. Baugh, "Hyperbaton and Greek Literary Style in Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 59, no. 2 (2017): 194–213; Michael Edward Gudorf, "Through a Classical Lens: Hebrews 2:16," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, no. 1 (2000): 105–108; Friedrich Gustav Lang, "Observations on the Disposition of Hebrews," *Novum Testamentum* 2019, 61 no. 2 (2019): 176–196.

in the Greek New Testament" classified as questions. These questions were particular regarding the rhetorical nature found in the texts of these scriptures.<sup>349</sup> The research also showed tensions concerning the interpretative efforts regarding these warning passages. But these tensions could have disappeared if expositors had used the proper rhetorical genre.

Although not without criticism, the eschatological orientation, or direction that the author employed while applying rhetorical devices in the book, has emerged with pertinent biblical references and other sources. The reader could review on the appendix section of this research how other authors have dealt with the same controversy facing scholars for so many years and how they have particularly dealt with the same issue with a different result. Some of these scholars are the same used by the biblical committees that have interpreted the passages for different Bible translations.

### **Scholastic Debate**

A personal exchange of words happened between the interpretation of these so-called warning passages and one of the scholars from the anti-eternal security camp, Dr. David DeSilva. For this section, I will change the conversation to the first person to emphasize the point that I am trying to make. I attempted some clarification from this scholar, but we could not reach a consensus. For example, and interestingly to know this dichotomy: he disagrees with the statement of synergy, or synergism, concerning salvation. He believes I was only misinterpreting his words, which was not his true intention. This misunderstanding is perhaps what happened as he wrote the book *Perseverance in Gratitude*, which erroneously credits other types of rhetorical genres. Mistakenly, since this would imply that the author of Hebrews used epidemic or even

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<sup>349</sup> Douglas Estes, *Questions and Rhetoric in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 17–19.

forensic rhetoric in conveying his message—a premise not supported by this research. One of the better things is all that Jesus began to do with his sacrifice.<sup>350</sup> There is, of course, a discrepancy with DeSilva's findings, but I digress.

He stated in our messenger conversation, *"I don't believe that a person can "lose his/her salvation." I believe that a person can fail to persevere all the way on the path to salvation. I put it this way because I think we need to take with equal seriousness the passages in the NT that speak of salvation as something that has happened for believers AND as something that is drawing nearer every day for believers (as in Rom 13:11). I have to develop a theology of salvation that leaves room for Jesus' coming again for our deliverance (Heb 9:28) and for statements about "a salvation ready to be revealed" (1 Pet 1:5) towards which we are still pressing. I know this is not the theology you have espoused (and I sense that it is not a possibility that you are likely to consider seriously)." Of course, I was not offended.*

But not only was I confused by his explanation, but I was also concerned about the apparent gap in translation, which could never emerge from a new budding scholar such as myself.<sup>351</sup> This issue has been the driving force behind the completion of this dissertation and one that I hope will be the catalyst of change as it relates to the terminology used by scholars of these passages or as new theories are being developed and espoused. Exposition must consider the cultures in which the audiences and the authors were. This consideration must happen before

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<sup>350</sup> It is undisputed that Jesus was better than any other teacher in the history of the Jewish people. The author of Hebrews must have been aware of this fact, as he presented Jesus and His works as better things, which Jesus began to do, see Ripley, Jason J. "'Those Things that Jesus had Begun to do and Teach" Narrative Christology and Incarnational Ecclesiology in Acts." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 44, no. 2 (2014): 87–99.

<sup>351</sup> Pleasantly surprised will be an understatement when this article was found, see Nick J Sciallo, "The Graduate Student as Writer: Encouragement for the Budding Scholar by Shuyi Chua (Review)." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 51, no. 4 (2020): 320–324.

anyone makes any expositional assertions, especially if they go against what the biblical canon teaches.

I intended to see if I could, once and for all, bridge the gap in scholarship as it relates to these "warning passages." The application would surface to see if this research can resolve the problems with interpretation. Most scholars may not agree with this new exposition or translation given to these supposed warning passages at this junction. As a result, I would come up as someone trying to either make a name for themselves or not have the necessary tools to accomplish the mission. However, this seems to be a one-sided proposition, mainly a lonely one at best. I have recognized a dual usage of the double rhetoric by the author of Hebrews; this new concept may come across as a new way to push the protestant legal agenda or theory altogether.<sup>352</sup> Interestingly, this supposed presupposition has been far from the research during the exposition. Only the text has been considered, contrary to what many may believe.

### **The Argument**

An *ipse dixit* or a *populum* argument could emerge if all this research did was cite previous scholars and recapitulate their positions.<sup>353</sup> A careful examination of why the author of Hebrews used the OT passages within his rhetorical presentation within passages has surfaced. This research postulated several questions in the form of dichotomies, and hopefully, these have alleviated any potential tensions in the scriptures. First, the author was not simply trying to recapitulate history (presenting an accusation or defense), which would have been the forensic

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<sup>352</sup> For an interesting discussion in relation to this issue, see Jeffrey B. Hammond, "Protestant Legal Theory? Apology and Objections." *The Journal of Law and Religion* 32, no. 1 (2017): 86–92.

<sup>353</sup> For a discussion on *populum* arguments, see Ralph Barnes, Zoë Neumann, and Samuel Draznin-Nagy, "Source Related Argumentation found in Science Websites: A Quantitative Study," *Informal Logic* 40, no. 3 (2020): 443–473. Conversely, the *ipse dixit* argument can be studied, see Gregory E Maggs, "Ipse Dixit: The Restatement (Second) of Contracts and the Modern Development of Contract Law," *The George Washington Law Review* 66, no. 3 (1998): 508.

form of rhetoric. Nor was he trying to show repetition in history (by either praise or blame), which would have been the epideictic form of rhetoric. None of these delivery methods could have addressed both audiences simultaneously; if the author had used them forensically or epideictically.

The author could have only presented deliberative rhetoric (by presenting exhortation and dissuasion) simultaneously with his knowledge of Greek and Jewish rhetoric, respectively. On the Jewish ethical side of the spectrum, he gave them dissuasion by giving them the history of the people of God in the OT. The author of Hebrews presented his message this way, wanting to prevent further sin and further evildoers amongst them. This approach was the new direction for the people of the NCP, which included both Jewish and Greek alike. While on the Greek side, or practical side, the author of Hebrews gave them hortatory exhortation concerning suffering. This appeal was a new direction for the people of the NCP. This direction was and still is representative of both cultures. Both cultures now merged into the same.

### **The Application**

The application of the socio-linguistical method (a hybrid method) has yielded the only plausible way for the author of Hebrews to deliver this new message of better things. This message was for them to make a better policy decision of direction because of the better things in Christ that they now enjoy. In the Epistle, there are better findings for the people of the NCP. The Epistle appears to have personifications that the author of Hebrews used to emphasize his message of direction rather than a destination.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Joseph R. Dodson, *The "Powers" of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (New York; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 68.

Here are some common findings that require a new look. These findings are by no means exhaustive. The hybrid method used is not a criticism but a validation of this research. These findings indicate the deliberative rhetoric utilized by the author, which accomplishes the intended message. Giving both cultures their individual needs so that moving forward, they would keep their eyes on the perfecter of their faith (Heb 12:2). Christ is the center of their new position!

### **Christ is the κρείττων Salvation**

As discussed in chapter three, the author of Hebrews explained the concept of salvation on seven different occasions. Not only does this number reflect the number of perfections, but it also denotes its completeness in Hebrew culture. In Hebrew, "seven" has the same consonants as the word for completeness or wholeness.<sup>355</sup> In the Hebrew culture, this number signifies ways to express the ideas of completion, perfection, and holiness and highlight keywords or elements within a text. In the Bible, there are multiple examples of the usage and significance of the seven.

For example, God creates for six days, and on the seventh day, God rests, blessing and sanctifying the seventh day. Noah must bring seven pairs of clean animals on the ark. Cain obtained a seven-fold punishment, as are the Israelites if they sin. Jacob worked for Rachel and Leah for seven years each. God will punish Israel seven-fold for "walking with hostility towards God, in the book of Leviticus. The list goes on and on. However, Meir Bar Ilan, professor of Talmud at Bar Ilan University, cautions against counting elements in a text to arrive at an

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<sup>355</sup> John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology: A Basic Study of the Use of Numbers in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968) 116–19; Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978), 5; Francine Klagsbrun, *The Fourth Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day* (NY: Harmony, 2002), 49.

exegetically significant number because this number is not intrinsic to the text and is rather "imported" by the reader.<sup>356</sup> According to the author, twelve things, like tribes, were better.

Although there may be the need for further investigation, purely on the matter of the usage of the number seven by the author of Hebrews, the author of Hebrews used the number seven to show something that needed no other aspect for completion. For example, the author of Hebrews uses seven titles to refer to the Savior of the NCP. The author's seven titles in the book of Hebrews are 1) Heir of all things (1:2), 2) Author of our salvation (2:10), 3) Apostle and High Priest (3:1), 4) Source of Eternal Salvation (5:9), 5) Forerunner for Us (6:20), 6) Great Priest (10:21) and 7) the Author and Perfecter of our Faith (12:2). So, perhaps this aspect appeared by the author inconspicuously and the author did this by using both Jewish and Greek rhetoric simultaneously.

Classical Greek authors used a phenomenon called superlative when they wanted to emphasize something.<sup>357</sup> For example, other rhetoricians have used the word κρείττων "better" was used over thirteen times to show the exaggerated emphasis between a better argument and a bad one.<sup>358</sup> Multiple other Greek authors would use the same literary device, too many to mention. Still, it would not be far-fetched to see that the author of Hebrews was using the same superlative when writing his Epistle with his continual usage of the concept of better things, which have surfaced as findings within this chapter.

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<sup>356</sup> Meir Bar Ilan, "Back to the Middle Ages: Secret Numbers in the Hebrew Bible," *Bet Mikra* 58 (2013), 153–166. To see how the number was expressed in other biblical books, see Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 186; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 75.

<sup>357</sup> For a discussion on superlatives see, H. Zellner, "Sappho's Supra-Superlatives," *Classical Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2006): 292–97; W. Martin Bloomer, "The Superlative "Nomoi" of Herodotus's "Histories," *Classical Antiquity* 12, no. 1 (1993): 30–50.

<sup>358</sup> Aristophanes *Clouds*, LLC 488, 130–167.

The question comes then, was the author of Hebrews attempting to convey completeness when it came to salvation for the people of the NCP? Because of the communal ethos they enjoyed, the author most likely communicated the benefit that the benefactor was giving them in the form of His Son, which makes it better than any other benefaction they may have received in the past words, a better covenant.<sup>359</sup> Similarly, if salvation is a gift from the benefactor, conveyed by the author of Hebrews as "better" *κρείττων* things, then, as the communal ethos would have it, the clients were required to show gratitude, not a feeling of the impending doom of losing this benefaction.

The gift, which should include the gift of salvation, and the calling are final (Romans 11:29). The author of Hebrews conveyed this principle of irrevocability quite superbly within the Epistle in more than one way for the audience to see.<sup>360</sup> This concept should become more evident as all the better things images appear next. The author of Hebrews, perhaps using prolific rhetoric, attempted to convey to the audience better things brought to them by the sacrifice of Christ, something never done before or since this first-century audience, all sandwiched between hyperbatons. But the author used zero hyperbaton in the salvation exposition. The author mentions explicitly better things concerning salvation (Heb 6:9). This salvation is not only a

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<sup>359</sup> In the book of Hebrews, references to the new covenant appear quite frequently, in particular from chapter 7 onwards (Heb 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24); see Gert J. C Jordaen, "Some Reflections on the 'new Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," In *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Andrew R Davis, "A Biblical View of Covenants Old and New," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 81, no. 3 (2020): 631–648.

<sup>360</sup> The people of the NCP received a new gift, as all believers have done in Christ, and a new calling which by biblical accounts are irrevocable, see Marianne Moyaert, "'The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable' (Rom 11:29): A Theological Reflection," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (2018): 24–43; Adam Gregerman, "Superiority without Supersessionism: Walter Kasper, the Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable, and God's Covenant with the Jews" *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 79, no. 1 (2018): 36–59; Henry Wansbrough, "The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable: Commission for Religious Relationships with the Jews," *European Judaism* 50, no. 1 (2017): 81–91; Philip A. Cunningham, "The Sources Behind 'The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable' (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate (no. 4)," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 12, no. 1 (2017): 1–39.

typology from the OT that the Hebrew people were awaiting ישועה in the NT, but also, the author personifies salvation in the person of Jesus. He identifies Jesus as the founder, source, the one who declared, and the testator; all within the concept of κρείττων expressive of things that belong to salvation.

### **Christ is the κρείττων Human Being**

The necessity for Christ to be a Superior human was the antecedent requirement for the sacrifice to be perfect. Scholars have suggested a systematic analysis of how the author of the Letter to the Hebrews links Christ and the sacrificial system, exploring the author's method of using the sacrificial system in his discourses.<sup>361</sup> However, as pointed out above, it is believed that this way shows the Superiority of Christ in all things. The areas in which the author of Hebrews embraces traditional Jewish cultic ideas and builds on these basics are those in which Hebrews significantly diverges and modifies high priestly features. Again, the author recapitulates the motif of better things in Christ concerning all aspects, including the part of His humanity. Twice in the Epistle, the author alludes to Jesus being a much better human being. The author compares Jesus to other ministers or humans (Hebrews 8:6; 12:24). This gives attributes of better things concerning Jesus, thus a better human being.

The way the author bases his motif of superiority on the sacrificial cult shows that he acknowledges the prior and subsequent efficacy of the high priest and sacrifices for contending with sin. Even when modifying the priestly cult to show that Christ's atonement is superior to

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<sup>361</sup> The motif of High Priest and Christology has been studied ad nauseam, see, Eyal Regev, "Hebrews' High Priestly Christology: Models, Method and Aim," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (2021): 971; David M. Moffitt, "Jesus as Interceding High Priest and Sacrifice in Hebrews: A Response to Nicholas Moore," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42, no. 4 (2020): 542–552; Christian A Eberhart, and Donald Schweitzer, "The Unique Sacrifice of Christ According to Hebrews 9: A Study in Theological Creativity," *Religions* 10, no. 1 (2019): 47; Nicholas J. Moore, "Sacrifice, Session and Intercession: The End of Christ's Offering in Hebrews," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42, no. 4 (2020): 521–541.

and takes the place of the Temple cult, he bases himself on the fundamentals of the high priest entering the Holy of Holies with blood. The author uses the sacrificial cult as a model for the dual perfection of Christ, human and divine, as a roadmap for navigating the teaching of superior salvation. It suggests that the author of Hebrews aimed to make sense of Jesus' death and atonement. Perhaps even to shed light on other NT writers and cultic metaphors found within the second temple period and in biblical accounts. Nothing short of a superior sacrifice by an extraordinary human was required to show the audience the supremacy of Christ.

The Christian faith emerges in the person of Jesus. Notice that anyone can study Jesus similarly to other historical persons.<sup>362</sup> An exciting fact must be remembered: for two centuries now, scholars have sought to discover the historical Jesus instead of the Jesus found in the scriptures.<sup>363</sup> Primary sources are available for our perusal as they relate to the historical Jesus' evaluation. For the most part, scholars have divided them into non-Christian sources, which subdivide into pagan and Jewish, and Christian origins, which subdivide into extrabiblical and biblical references.<sup>364</sup> But a reader must remember that the life of Jesus, unlike any other historical person, was full of the supernatural. Only in the Bible these bizarre accounts can be found, except as it relates to the historian Josephus and his *Testimonium Flavianum*," where he mentions "countless" marvelous things in his writings about Jesus, the Messiah.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Larry W Hurtado. "Resurrection-Faith and the 'Historical' Jesus." *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 11, no. 1 (2013): 35.

<sup>363</sup> Jonathan Bernier. *The Quest for the Historical Jesus After the Demise of Authenticity: Toward a Critical Realist Philosophy of History in Jesus Studies*. Vol. 540. (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 73; Sigurd Grindheim, "Faith in Jesus: The Historical Jesus and the Object of Faith." *Biblica* 97, no. 1 (2016): 79–100; Chris Keith, "The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus: Current Debates, Prior Debates and the Goal of Historical Jesus Research." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38, no. 4 (2016): 426–455.

<sup>364</sup> Robert H Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 25.

<sup>365</sup> Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 25.

This historical Jesus has been the subject of debate for several decades, including and not limited to some discussions between Christians and Muslims.<sup>366</sup> But for the most part, scholars have used the narrative events described in the four Gospels to address these debates and other issues.<sup>367</sup> Bernier mentions non-Christian sources and divides them into two categories: pagan and Jewish. It is worth noting that from the second century, some pagan writers began to refer to Jesus as the founder of Christianity.<sup>368</sup> On the pagan side of writers, or sources, the author mentions the most important sources: Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius. In contrast, he cites less critical sources such as Mara bar Serapion and Julius Africanus. Also, on the Jewish side of writers, he mentions Josephus and some rabbinic writings, but Josephus had the most impact on the current discussions.<sup>369</sup>

There are several important historical points of reference when trying to investigate the historical Jesus. Equally essential to mention is the fact that biblical accounts to prove the historicity of Jesus are not chronological. The death of Herod is one of those historical events that a reader can compare between the biblical accounts and the writings of Josephus as it relates to the life of Jesus. Also recorded are the wise men's visit, as described in the biblical narrative, and the findings of astronomer Johannes Kepler about describing the appearance of the "star" of Bethlehem.<sup>370</sup> The placement of historical governors appears in historical accounts compared to

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<sup>366</sup> Damian Howard, "'Who do You Say that I Am?': Christians and Muslims Disputing the Historical Jesus." *Neotestamentica* 49, no. 2 (2015;2016;): 297.

<sup>367</sup> Chris Keith, "The Narratives of the Gospels and the Historical Jesus: Current Debates, Prior Debates and the Goal of Historical Jesus Research," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38, no. 4 (2016): 426.

<sup>368</sup> Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 25.

<sup>369</sup> Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 25.

<sup>370</sup> J. K. Fotheringham, "The Evidence of Astronomy and Technical Chronology for the Date of the Crucifixion," *Journal of Theological Studies* 35 (1934): 146.

mentioning some of these governors in biblical narratives.<sup>371</sup> These are but a few events that are not only what the Gospels say. Possibilities are referenced in sources outside the scriptures and can contrast against biblical accounts for scholars and anyone interested in posterity. The author of Hebrews mentioned Jesus fourteen times in his Epistle.

There have been multiple attempts to explain the historical person of Jesus outside the mentioned sources. Examples are non-scholastic works in books, articles, and even movies. A committed scholar must go beyond those to ascertain the true persona of Jesus, the Messiah. The fact that there are non-biblical sources of the historical events mentioned in scriptures and other sources say Jesus outside of the Bible was not necessary for this writer's personal belief. However, it is helpful to advance in examining the Superior Human Being of Jesus. Jesus was, according to Hebrews, better (Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 11:35; 11:40).

Unsurprisingly, the name given to Jesus in the Gospels, Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:3, has been studied for so long and will continue until His return. The continuation of the story from the Old Testament to the New Testament makes the study of the historical Jesus fascinating. This motif emerges in the concept of better things presented in the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews, Jesus was a perfect man, a better man (Heb 5:9; 6:9). Jesus had the task to die for the sins of all, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Romans 5:12. Here, the perfect man who brought forth life, not death nor condemnation, contrary to what some scholars believe.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6, 395.

<sup>372</sup> Apparently, some this scholar attributes eternal condemnation in the book of Hebrews, see Brent Nongbri, "a Touch of Condemnation in a Word of Exhortation: Apocalyptic Language and Graeco-Roman Rhetoric in Hebrews 6:4–12." *Novum Testamentum* 45, no. 3 (2003): 265–279.

### Christ is the κρείττων Faithfulness and Mercy

Regarding faithfulness and mercy, Christ showed a superiority far exceeding any prior being. In the OT, there was a point in which God did not want any more sacrifices, but ἡσέδ (hesed) (Hosea 6:6), and the author of Hebrews was quite aware of this issue when he cited the counter-part word ἔλεος (eleos) three times in his Epistle. Some scholars have suggested that "though affirming Christ's finality, it poses theological difficulties in religiously pluralistic contexts. Perhaps those with universalist views; so, they postulate that Christ's Superiority is not a matter of exclusion or denigration of other religions." But Christ did not want more religions; He wanted a deeper or special relationship between humans and God. As a result, the author quite eloquently expressed the Christian community's hope for universal fellowship and started with the NCP.<sup>373</sup>

The author of Hebrews expressed the Superiority of Christ's faithfulness at least four times (Heb 2:17; 3:2; 3:6; 10:23). The subject of faith about a distinction found in Christ because of His sacrifice is an overwhelming motif in the Epistle.<sup>374</sup> Scholars, however, have understood faith in the book of Hebrews in terms of four dimensions (1) either enabled or modeled by Jesus; (2) the characteristics of obedience or perseverance; (3) directed in hope to the eschaton; (4) faith has a corporate dimension.<sup>375</sup> But I suggest that there is a typology here indicative of better things, including faithfulness and mercy (Heb 7:19). This hope is congruent with the

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<sup>373</sup> There is no dichotomy in showing Christ finality or superiority to the idea that the author of Hebrews was not aware that others would be part of the NCP, not just of Jewish origin; see Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, "The Finality of Christ and the Religious Alternative," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 78, no. 2 (2017): 348–368.

<sup>374</sup> The topic of the superior faith of Christ is abundantly clear in the entire NT, see B. J. Oropeza, "Justification by Faith in Christ Or Faithfulness of Christ? Updating the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate considering Paul's use of Scripture," *Journal of Theological Studies* 72, no. 1 (2021): 102–124; Morna D Hooker, "Another Look at [the Faithfulness of Christ] (Text in Greek)," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 69, no. 1 (2016): 46.

<sup>375</sup> Madison N. Pierce, "Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59, no. 2 (2016): 422.

personification of Jesus of the better human, "through which people draw near to God," according to the author of Hebrews. This personification appears in the NT. But the biblical authors seem to have applied the typology that the OT people described in the covenant.

### **Christ is the κρείττων Perseverance**

The author of Hebrews developed the concept of ὑπομονή (*hoopamonay*). In its symbolic way, "which is characterized by a man who unhinges from his deliberate purpose." "His loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." This faith was typical of first-century Christians. But also in its Christological way. He did this by urging the readers to look in faith to Jesus Christ, the personification of Superiority, which helped them and future readers who would also desire to persevere in a crisis.<sup>376</sup> No other human has endured as much as Christ has, and no other human has been such a good benefactor (Heb 12:2).

Christ's perseverance in offering His sacrifice showed by His eternal sacrifice, ending the sacrificial work for the forgiveness of sins. Also, by inaugurating His royal reign and priestly prayer, Christ's atoning offering was perpetual and coextensive with His intercession.<sup>377</sup> According to the author of Hebrews, the people of the NCP are to persevere through salvation in Christ. Jesus was the typological or personification example of the Superiority they now possess. If Christ's intercession for His people is perpetual, would it not make sense that His salvation is also perpetual? The people of the NCP receive the patron's superior benefaction through

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<sup>376</sup> The concept of perseverance is quite clear in the Epistle to the Hebrews, see P. H. Rob Van Houwelingen, "The Epistle to the Hebrews: Faith Means Perseverance," *Journal of Early Christian History* 3, no. 1 (2013): 98–115; Henry M. Knapp, "John Owen's Interpretation of Hebrews 6:4–6: Eternal Perseverance of the Saints in Puritan Exegesis," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 1 (2003): 29–52.

<sup>377</sup> The juxtaposition of salvation and intercession can be appreciated by the superiority of Christ, see Nicholas J. Moore, "Sacrifice, Session and Intercession: The End of Christ's Offering in Hebrews," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42, no. 4 (2020): 521–541; Albert Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1–2a," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1–8.

redemption. Those who have placed hope in the Superior Savior are displayed for all to see.

Jesus Christ is the personification of perseverance and the example for all to follow, including this perseverance (Hebrews 12:1).

Some still argue that perseverance, as it relates to Christianity, is shown by acts and that faith without works is dead.<sup>378</sup> The early church failed to interpret this verse as "works alone," as some in the contemporary church have proposed. Instead, an "active faith" produces good works because of a person's salvation by the results of Christ on the cross. In essence, James's teachings were parallel to the teachings of Jesus by pointing out those who "claim" to have genuine faith. There is no "manifestation" of such confidence in their deeds, like the Pharisees in Jesus' times, which was prolific in the NT writings (Heb 11:3).

Jesus said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matt 7:24). Jesus' words convey similarities to James 2:17, which alludes to the dichotomy of those who only "hear the word" and do not "do the word." The evidence of a genuine profession of salvation in Jesus Christ is not presented merely by what a person claims. The evidence is what a person does. An example would be comparing what a person does to what a person professes. The famous phrase, "You will know them by their fruit," comes to mind.

Similarly, some in the church may have "empty confessions." And that is what James was addressing in James 2:14. James used the conjunction *ἐὰν* (*ean*) to show this contrast between those with righteous behavior conforming to God's revealed Word, which is pleasing to Him, and

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<sup>378</sup> To show this correlation, the book of James must be examined for its intended purpose, see Andrew T. Le Peau, and Phyllis J. Le Peau, *A Deeper Look at James: Faith that Works* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2013), 65; J. A. Motyer, *The Message of James: The Tests of Faith*, Revised, London (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 38.

those who merely said they did.<sup>379</sup> Perhaps many think there is a contradiction between what Paul said, what the author of Hebrews said, and what James said. These biblical authors were not confronting each other face to face but instead fighting two common enemies: works-righteous legalism vs. easy-professing beliefs in which both extremes and danger exist. Here is where the dual cultures differed so much.

It appears that James was addressing "false compassion," as he was comparing faith without works to words of compassion without the acts of kindness in James 2:15–17. There is a fitting analogy in that "dead faith" is characterized by "false compassion" by those who simply have a verbal concern for others, which is no more than hyperbole. The Greek construction of ὑπάγετε ἐν εἰρήνῃ θερμαίνεσθε καὶ χορτάζεσθε (*hupagete en erene thermaineste kai chortazeste*) indicates insufficient nourishment for everyday healthy living, not necessarily starvation, and actions, not just words must meet these needs. Therefore, the author of Hebrews gives us the glorious chapter on faith in action and speaks of the need for perseverance (Heb 10:36).

The third characteristic of dead faith can contrast with "shallow conviction," which can appear by recognizing specific facts about God and His Word, but without submission, as seen in James 2:18–25. In this passage, James was referring to himself, speaking of himself in the third person, out of humility and not in a boastful manner (v.18). He was showing practical evidence that faith always indicates, not just the words that a shallow conviction says about faith alone. The author of Hebrews expressed the same when he gave his discourses.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 267.

<sup>380</sup> As it relates to biblical authors, the concept of faith was shown both as a noun and as a verb, see James R. Edwards, "Faith as Noun and Verb," *Christianity Today (Washington)* 29, no. 11 (1985): 21.

James used sarcasm to cast against an imaginary but universally familiar orthodoxy devoid of saving faith. James insisted that orthodox doctrine, by itself, is no guarantee of salvation. Even demons (Jas 2:19) are ancestral in knowing and acknowledging the truth about God. Only active faith can love a neighbor as a person loves himself, as seen in Matthew 22:39. It is a fact that for the Jewish people, the Shema was the centered belief *שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד* (Shama Yishrael Adonai Eloheyno Adonai Echad). Still, this belief alone did not save anyone, as the Jewish people forgot the following verse.<sup>381</sup> James was conveying these thoughts, and the author of Hebrews as well.

Unlike the three characteristics of dead faith, living faith is shown in James 2:21–26. James gives two examples from the Old Testament (Abraham and Rahab) of people with genuine faith and works that indicate, not just empty words, much like the author of Hebrews did, as explained in previous chapters. The reference to Abraham (James 2:21–23) being *ἐδικαιώθη edikαιοthei* or justified contrasted by his actions, not just his words. Rahab acknowledges that the God of Israel was the faithful Lord, but by her actions, she trusted Him. James compares dead faith, or those who profess faith without works, to be like a body without a spirit (v. 26). Now, the better things in Christ accomplish a goal: a typology used over nineteen times in the NT. It included the better High Priest used in Hebrews and the embodiment of better perseverance in Christ (Heb 12:1).

### Christ is the *κρείττων* High Priest

In presenting Christ as the Superior High Priest, the author of Hebrews thoroughly developed this topic. Fourteen times the word *ἀρχιερεύς (archiereus)* or High Priest appeared in

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<sup>381</sup> Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon [BDB]* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

the Epistle, and twelve times are explicitly referring to Jesus Christ in a superior manner as the previous ἀρχιερεύς. In presenting the Old Testament narratives related to the High Priest, the Epistle's author used traditional rabbinic methods of interpretation of Scripture that were acceptable during first-century times. For all intended purposes, the author of Hebrews expressed the Superiority of Christ to the people of the NCP with eschatological precision as it needed no other intervention by anyone else. Jesus, as a High Priest, was the quintessential or superior benefactor for the people of God (Heb 3:1; 4:14; 4:15; 5:10).

In essence, the author of Hebrews showed that the High Priest Melchizedek, spoken of in the scriptures, was not only a historical person but also a person with eschatological functions in the person of Jesus Christ. He was not only a prototype of the priest of the future or a prototype of the Messiah. He was also the Messiah, the Son of God (Heb 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29). The author of Hebrews presented the person of Melchizedek as a priest. He did this to express the divinity and identity of Christ. He did this to show that God the Father acted through His Son in the OT and continues in the New Testament. The research explained the typology of Jesus as a High Priest in previous chapters. As a result of Jesus' Superiority in sacrificial presentation, He is the faithful High Priest without needing another.<sup>382</sup> There is a sense of intentionality in the High Priest's actions and completeness, in need of nothing else for perpetuity. The author presented fifteen times the personification of Christ as High Priest in the Epistle.

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<sup>382</sup> The superiority of Christ as a High Priest has been studied by many scholars, see Alexander Shumilin, "Melchizedek through the Eyes of the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Skhid: Analitychno-informatsiinyi zhurnal* no. 5(163) (2019): 91–95; K. Lacy, "A Holy Nation Crocker," *Reformed Theological Review* 72, no. 3 (2013): 185–201; Piotr Blajer, "Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession. Audience-Oriented Criticism of Heb 3:1–6," *The Biblical Annals* 11, no. 2 (2021): 281–300.

### Christ is the κρείττων Eternal Redemption

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author envisages Son's enthronement to the heavenly world as a condition precedent for humanity to enjoy salvation. In his presentation of the Epistle, he showed that this claim was essential and logical regarding the author's argument that humanity's salvation was once and for all accomplished. The epitome of this conclusion bolsters the rarely recognized *inclusio* between the pericopes found in Hebrews 1:5–14 and 12:18–29.<sup>383</sup> Four texts suggest that the author envisions Son's narrative, particularly His entrance into God's heavenly realm, as a soteriological necessity and pattern for the NCP.

Canonically, a reader can recognize the history of redemption.<sup>384</sup> But it is in the book of Hebrews that the complete revelation appears. The pinnacle is the author's back-and-forth exposition and exhortation concerning Christ's typological Superiority or the illustration of the better eternal Redemption (Heb 9:12). The author had to use a new way to convey this truth. He chose to use Jewish and Greek rhetoric for the full effect. For example, in the book of Hebrews, Christ's offering was the cultic offering that pleased God and achieved God's salvific will for humanity eternally, "once and for all."

It appears God did not take pleasure in Levitical sacrifices; God commanded and promised they would achieve specific effects. The first covenant sacrifices performed atonement and forgiveness, albeit temporarily, because they foreshadowed the anticipated and appropriated

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<sup>383</sup> For a more in-dept discussion about the entrance of Jesus or his enthronement, see Joshua W. Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14," *New Testament Studies* 56, no. 4 (2010): 557–575.

<sup>384</sup> Gilsun Ryu, "The Federal Theology and the History of Redemption in Jonathan Edwards's Biblical Exegesis," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61, no. 4 (2018): 785–803; Shimon Bakon, "The Day of the Lord," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2010): 149–156; Albert J Coetsee, "The Book of Hebrews and the Reformed View of Scripture: Hebrews Echoed in Belgic Confession Articles 2–7," In *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 54, no. 2 (2020): 1–10; Philip La G du Toit, "Reconsidering 'Law' in Hebrews," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 42, no. 1 (2021): 1–7.

Christ's Superior Eternal Redemption. The audience or the NCP were the original recipients of this eternal gift bestowed by the benefactor. The new and better covenant was now expressed to them deliberately so they could understand. The better and perfect Tabernacle accomplished this personification of eternal Redemption in Christ (Heb 9:11).

### **Christ is the κρείττων Exhortation**

Hebrews stands in the tradition, for example, of the representations of Deuteronomy, which echo the way other 2nd Temple Jewish texts alluded to it for their respective communities. Through his exposition and exhortation, the author of Hebrews does not just use Deuteronomy or repeated law for the NCP; it encourages them to become the new Deuteronomy while challenging its predecessor's contemporary hegemony.<sup>385</sup> The author of Hebrews' exposition and exhortation of the theological argument presented shows continuous successive inferences drawn from the OT. Scholars have noticed that the author "uses the text in the first part of his exposition to (1) interpret Jesus' resurrection as his messianic enthronement, (2) connect Jesus' enthronement with his fulfillment of OT visions for humanity; (3) begin to explain *why* Jesus was enthroned through suffering."<sup>386</sup> The author uses Christ's superior exhortation as the *expo facto laws* now repudiated in the NCP.

Others have indicated that in the second and third parts of his exposition and exhortation, the author uses the text to summarize the narrative, bringing corroboration. Also, the author of Hebrews uses the text to (1) show that the Messiah was a superior priest and (2) show that this

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<sup>385</sup> For a more in dept study of Deuteronomy in Hebrews, see David M Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Re-Presentation*, vol. 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 32; M. Erik, Philip D. Krey Heen, and Thomas C. Oden, *Hebrews*, vol. 10 (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 105.

<sup>386</sup> The discussion of the usage of OT and the logic behind it see, Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, vol. 537 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015), 63.

messianic priest was a solution to the human problem through death in a unique way, thus making the appeal that Christ brings a unique way. Christians now have this newfound salvation; through Christ's typological superiority as it relates to all the aspects mentioned earlier concerning Christ's life.

People must understand that the consensus is that writers of the NT used literary tools to relate the information they wanted to convey to their readers (hearers). These academic tools can emerge as a literary analysis applied to the writings.<sup>387</sup> The biblical authors used literary devices in the gospels and other written writings. The reader can certainly use various hermeneutical tools, among other things, to ascertain the different aspects of their literary work.<sup>388</sup> This process inevitably takes time and would not be conducive to a sermon, as not everyone would understand. Therefore, dissertations are necessary to see the nuances of interpretation and if other methodologies are proper for the performance of the interpretative task.

Similarly, theological reading can relate to teaching and preaching; thus, the message is evident in both arenas. A scholar has mentioned that "the New Testament's "gospel" is a highly charged and theologically significant expression used by the apostles to summarize their proclaimed message about Jesus," which makes the theological message easy to teach and preach.<sup>389</sup> The same concept can apply to the author of Hebrews, *vis à vis* his mentioning of the

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<sup>387</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 217.

<sup>388</sup> Chak Yan Yeung, and John Lee, "Dialogue Analysis: A Case Study on the New Testament," *Language Resources and Evaluation* 53, no. 4 (2019): 603–623; Larry W. Hurtado, "Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? 'Orality', 'Performance' and Reading Texts in Early Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 60, no. 3 (2014): 321–340; M. David Litwa, "Literary Eyewitnesses: The Appeal to an Eyewitness in John and Contemporaneous Literature," *New Testament Studies* 64, no. 3 (2018): 343–361.

<sup>389</sup> Jonathan T Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 6.

good news (Heb 4:2, 4:6) and how the Epistle switches from exposition to exhortation almost flawlessly.

Although not everyone knows the literary tools used by biblical authors, almost everyone has heard the stories of Jesus. Scholars have asserted, "While it is helpful to read the Gospels from many vantage points, including historical background studies and using various critical theories, the most beneficial way of reading focuses on receiving the Gospels as stories. Doctrinally loaded and application-freighted narratives," and the scholar is correct.<sup>390</sup> The same happens to the Epistle to the Hebrews using typologies.

The NT writings include many great literary features. These features include drama, symbolism, irony, double entendre, poetic language, and many more. However, these concepts are not easily transmittable to an audience, and perhaps the teacher/preacher will inevitably lose the audience to boredom. Notwithstanding, many people are willing to learn about these literary features, but they are far between. Examples of literary elements would be the poetic quality found in the Gospels and the power of the symbolism behind the Gospels, which scholars have acknowledged.<sup>391</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, for example, there are three known symbolisms throughout that are recognized: first, the symbolic speeches; second, the imagery between faith and unbelief, for example (the blind men vs. the suspicion of the religious leaders); and third, the symbolic dimension of Jesus actions, for example, the Jesus narrative of the cleansing of the Temple, all with symbolic meanings.

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<sup>390</sup> Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 6

<sup>391</sup> Jan G. Van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper, and Udo Schnelle, *The Prologue of the Gospel of John: Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts. Papers Read at the Colloquium Ioanneum 2013* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 31.

## Personifications in the Book of Hebrews

These seven findings mentioned above are either typologies of better things foreshadowed from the OT to the NT in Christ or personifications that the author of Hebrews perhaps attempted to illustrate in the person of Jesus.<sup>392</sup> Rhetorically, these personifications appear to give voice to the inanimate object. As the author, the expressions attached to Christ bestowed divine power to Christ in a unique Greek way.<sup>393</sup> So the author used dual rhetoric to address both audiences and aim their direction. These personifications are implicit as the author describes Christ as superior or better than any other thing or matter.

The problem is when these implicit symbolic meanings can open the door for speculation in a way the biblical author never intended. Although the examples are too numerous to express, and since biblical teachings imply a relationship to religious faith, those who come to hear the sermon expect this relationship. The author of Hebrews must have been aware of this premise. To preach without the teachings of Jesus, His Superiority, compared to everything else, would be an injustice to the listeners.

This message was central to the growth of Christianity during the 1st century.<sup>394</sup> The researcher found this message not exclusively but at length in the NT and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The message of Jesus or the acts of Jesus would be so helpful in the present day; preachers need to include it weekly. When the Gospel message emerges, there is no room for racism, vandalism, or any other "isms" available for those who have not received the

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<sup>392</sup> David V Lott, "Paul's Personification of Hope, A Historical-Rhetorical Approach to Romans 5:5," Ph.D. diss., Liberty University, 2022.

<sup>393</sup> Emma Stafford, *Worshipping Virtues: Personification and the Divine in Ancient Greece* (London, UK: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 2000), 5.

<sup>394</sup> Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 44.

circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:29). Therefore, the author of Hebrews emphatically expressed the better things in Christ and personified Jesus' attributes.

Today, the church needs to hear more about the good news and less about the literary tools used by the biblical authors that wrote the Bible. Until the church is back on track with the biblical principles that created the church, only a few should be teaching biblical principles. This conclusion is counterintuitive to what this research shows, but it is a conclusion believed to be essential. Not everyone should lead because a believer could lose something based on analytical efforts using hermeneutical Olympics.

Teachers and preachers should focus more on the message of the Gospel than any other aspect of the scriptures so that the transmission of hope, love, reconciliation, salvation, and redemption, among other things, is heard worldwide. The commission was given to each Christian to preach the Gospel and not to preach/teach the literary readings erroneously or to interpret the "warning passages" incorrectly. Notwithstanding, hermeneutically speaking, it is a great tool to understand the literary significance of the NT writings; today, people must take a back seat and proclaim the central message of the Gospel, Jesus. Jesus is "the gospel" and the good news that the author of Hebrews was trying to convey. Jesus was God's final revelation and the better personification of His attributes ἀόρατος, in all respects.

### **Conditional and Unconditional Covenants**

The author of Hebrews also spent significant time developing the different negotiation concepts *vis à vis* covenants. Of interest is the finality in which the author attributes how God has spoken to people in His Son in these last days (Heb 1:2) with an Aorist Active Indicative verb in the form of ἐλάλησεν (*eilalesen*), showing a finality in His plan and how God communicates it to

His people. Similarly, the unconditionality in this New Covenant surfaces, whereas the old covenant was conditional.

The covenant of works represents what God required of His people to stand before Him and be in the right relationship. It was a conditional covenant. But the covenant of grace is unconditional. Regardless of the own works of His people, Christ accomplished it all for His people.<sup>395</sup> The covenant of works was linked to Christology because Christ, as the second Adam, completed the obligation to fulfill the law on humanity's behalf. He offered satisfaction to procure the remission of sin, thus eliminating the need for further sacrifice to stand before God as the OT did. More than any other book in the NT, the author of Hebrews wrote about "covenant" at least eighteen times, and it is here where the need to turn attention to see how he develops the concept of a better covenant than any covenant in the OT.

The author starts comparing covenants with the word better, *κρείττονος*, as discussed above in Hebrews 7:22, and continues using the same word in Hebrews 8:6. He then mentions the first covenant in Hebrews 8:7. He contrasts it with Hebrews 8:8, the new covenant. In Hebrews 8:9, there is a distinction between the Mosaic and Adamic covenants: Hebrews 8:10

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<sup>395</sup> The covenant of works (Latin: *foedus operum*, also called the covenant of life) was made in the Garden of Eden between God and Adam who represented all mankind as a federal head (Romans 5:12–21). The essence of the covenant of grace is the same throughout the Old and New Testaments—God saves sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. But its historical administration has varied by time and place. For example, the covenant of grace widened from the Old Testament to the New Testament, as it was administered first with small families (e.g., the families of Noah and Abram), then with the nation of Israel, but now with the church, which is made up of people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). Also, it was administered in the Old Testament through what the New Testament authors describe as "types" and "shadows" (Heb. 8:5; 10:1), such as sacrifices, the priesthood, and the temple, all of which pointed to their reality, Jesus Christ (Col. 2:17). In other words, they all pointed towards Jesus, which brings the new and better covenant. See Joe Mock, "Bullinger and the Covenant with Adam," *Reformed Theological Review* 70, no. 3 (2011): 185–205; Donald K. McKim, "Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition (Oxford: OUP, 2020), Xv" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 74, no. 4 (2021): 390–92; Toni Alimi, "Covenants and Commands," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 48, no. 3 (2020): 498–518.

mention of an OT covenant that looks towards the Lord. Putting laws in minds and hearts, which is the first set of six verses mentioning the word covenant, a progression appears.

The author reverses the order in Hebrews 8:13 in the form of the new covenant again. Hebrews 9:1 speaks of the first covenant, while Hebrews 9:4 compares two different covenants in the form of the ark of the covenant and the tables of the covenant. Swiftly, the author moves to Hebrews 9:15 to show another contrast between the new covenant and the first covenant. They proceeded a succession of two verses explaining the elements of the covenant in Hebrews 9:16-17. This succession eliminates any doubt of the necessity of blood to complete any covenant, which is the second set of six verses mentioning the word covenant.

From which ὅθεν (*hothen*), the author moves to talk about the necessity of blood to inaugurate a covenant in Hebrews 9:18 and Hebrews 9:20 and to explain what God said concerning a covenant in Hebrew 10:16, written on hearts and minds. The peculiarity of Hebrews 10:29 should jump up as the author compares the contaminated blood of the covenant and grace through the sacrifice of Christ. In Hebrews 12:24, a new covenant appears, which speaks better κρείττον.<sup>396</sup> The crescendo, as related to the covenant in the Epistle, comes in Hebrews 13:20, where the author mentions the eternal covenant and Jesus as the Shepherd of said covenant and Lord.

By now, a reader should see that the author of Hebrews was expositional and exhortative when delivering his message. He constantly switched between exposition and exhortation. For example, he encourages salvation by mentioning it in sets twenty-one times, or three times seven about faith, and seven times about titles for Jesus. As discussed above, all these topics have a

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<sup>396</sup> Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'new Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," In *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8.

number seven or completeness in the Epistle to the Hebrews. While he expositis and exhorted eighteen times, or three sets of six, about covenant, he used the word *better* κρείττον a total of thirteen times. In doing so, the author ensures that he mentions seven attributes of Jesus that are better (salvation, hope, promises, sacrifices, possessions, country, and resurrection) within the NCP as compared to the old (Heb 6:9; 7:19; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16; 11:35).<sup>397</sup>

That was the reason why the old covenant had to cease. Contrary to Arminian belief, the author of Hebrews, by using deliberative rhetoric, insisted that the benefactor always has and will always have the benefit from the bargain. The clients get the eternal benefaction of their position, secured once and for all. The idea darkens because the Jews of the first century Hellenism were viewed as living in an incoherent period, not for their Jewish heritage but their Greek one.<sup>398</sup> There has been a tremendous injustice of interpretation when it comes to these allusive warning passages.

For example, why would the author use the OT within the passages to show any warnings? Did he intend a literal interpretation, an allegorical interpretation, or perhaps a cultural application in his mind when he wrote the Epistle? Was he mainly recapitulating to the Jewish people, showing them that the covenant formulary, which the people of God knew, was no

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<sup>397</sup> The seven topics covered herein are indicative of the type of effort that the author used in expressing the concept of better things. See Madison N Pierce, "So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 4 (2020): 893–95; Ched Spellman, "The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 2 (2020): 354–357; Adam Gregerman, "Is the Biblical Land Promise Irrevocable? Post-Nostra Aetate Catholic Theologies of the Jewish Covenant and the Land of Israel," *Modern Theology* 34, no. 2 (2018): 137–158; David M. Moffitt, "Jesus' Heavenly Sacrifice in Early Christian Reception of Hebrews: A Survey," *Journal of Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (2017): 46–71; Mikel Burley, "Eternal Life as an Exclusively Present Possession: Perspectives from Theology and the Philosophy of Time," *Sophia* 55, no. 2 (2015/2016): 145–161; Tamir Sorek, and Alin M. Ceobanu, "Religiosity, National Identity and Legitimacy: Israel as an Extreme Case," *Sociology (Oxford)* 43, no. 3 (2009): 477–496; Roger Haight, "The Case for Spirit Christology," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 53, no. 2 (1992): 257–287.

<sup>398</sup> For a discussion on how the Greeks were viewed as incoherent during the Hellenistic period, see Boardman, *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, 364.

longer effective? This idea would follow Jewish logic. Or perhaps the author wanted to establish a new and improved motif to the Greek community, with the concept of better things waiting for a new position in general? This notion is only through Christ for all in the community. This approach would follow Greek logic. Within the spectrum of these possibilities of reason in mind, the author conveyed an NCP through his rhetorical exhortation. The author presented this proposal to the Jewish people, not in the same way as the covenant formulary before, but in opposition to doctrines of retribution, which the Greek people would find helpful in a practical way.

### **Christ is God's Final Revelation**

The purpose of writing the Epistle to the Hebrews was to reveal the finality of Christ's sacrifice. He accomplished this by showing the motif of Superiority in several directional areas, including, and not limited by, the NCP that the people of God now enjoyed. The author described it, in these last days ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων (*ep eschatou tein heimeiron touton*) indicative of the shortage from anything else to happen subsequently. Christ's sacrifice had an eternality attached to it by the author of Hebrews (Heb 5:9). The audience was now partaking with Christ of the benefits conferred by his sacrifice.<sup>399</sup> Using rhetorical devices, the patron has shown the clients the necessity of the benefaction. This idea necessitated leaving sin behind and running their respective races, looking at the author and perfecter of the same (Heb 12:2). This revelation was dualistic insofar that it applied to both cultures.

Scholars have determined that God's revelation was progressive. His revelation in His Son was superior, climactic, and final. God's final revelation in His Son can only be understood

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<sup>399</sup> Benjamin J Ribbens, "Partakers of Christ: Union with Christ in Hebrews," *Pro Ecclesia* (Northfield, MN) 31, no. 3 (2022): 282–301.

when examined within the context of His Old Testament revelation, and vice versa.<sup>400</sup> The author used the OT not as a form of *sine qua non* for the people of the NCP to continue in the same cycle as before; but to show something better, far superior, has reached them in a final revelation in the form of the awaited first born (begotten) πρωτότοκον (*phrototokon*) Son.<sup>401</sup>

A warning passage would seem counterproductive to the good news they were receiving or about to receive. If the church is to present the Gospel's good news, but there is an adherent to the old law, then there is no good news or better news but the exact recapitulation of the old. In that case, why would people have needed a Savior to accomplish what humans could not achieve? Inevitably, a conclusion must support the fact that better things κρεῖττον appear to the people of God with the writings found in the book of Hebrews. A reader should negate a notion of any biblical tension once the proper methodology of interpretation emerges. The socio-linguistic method included a distinction between two cultures. But a wrong conclusion has concerned the people of God as a community. This conclusion has created further tensions in the interpretation. There should be no tension for those saved if the proper method, in this case, the suitable rhetorical method, is used concerning the people of God.<sup>402</sup> So, what about these warning passages?

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<sup>400</sup> Revelation can be best understood when studied topologically, see Albert Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1–2a," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1–8; Beata Toth, "Diaphany of the Divine Milieu or the Epiphany of Divine Glory? - the Revelation of the Natural World in Teilhard De Chardin and Hans Urs Von Balthasar," *New Blackfriars* 95, no. 1059 (2014): 535–552.

<sup>401</sup> The Bible is not the only document that makes this assertion. Early extra-biblical interpretations pointed towards Jesus as the Son of God, see Michael Segal, "Who is the 'Son of God' in 4Q246? an Overlooked Example of Early Biblical Interpretation," *Dead Sea Discoveries: A Journal of Current Research on the Scrolls and Related Literature* 21, no. 3 (2014): 289–312. Other books in the Bible make this assertion as well, see Tommy Wasserman, "The 'Son of God' was in the Beginning (Mark 1:1)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 62, no. 1 (2011): 20–50; Andrew R. Angel, "'Crucifixus Vincens': The 'Son of God' as Divine Warrior in Matthew," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2011): 299–317.

<sup>402</sup> Elizabeth H. P. Backfish, "Transformative Learning Theory as a Hermeneutic for Understanding Tensions within Scripture," *Christian Scholar's Review* 50, no. 3 (2021): 281–295.

### **The Phrase Warning Passage Does Not Appear in the Book of Hebrews**

It is undisputed that the phrase warning passage is not present in any of the original manuscripts of the Epistle to the Hebrews. As a result, it appears that the author of Hebrews did not take time to specifically include phraseology alluding that he was warning anyone of any perils. As understood today, a warning would indicate a statement or event indicating a possible or impending danger, a problem, or other unpleasant situation. This danger is where the first question comes from: what is the threat? The researcher noticed that the author of Hebrews used hortatory rhetoric deliberately.<sup>403</sup> If true, the author used this type of rhetoric to allow the recipients to make a policy decision futuristically, not to present any danger in the future but to present history to produce the desired direction. This finding must be enough evidence to conclude that he was not warning them but encouraging them of better things.

Arguably, the absence of a phrase with a particular biblical passage does not necessarily mean that a reader could not understand the gist of the words within the biblical context. For example, the Christian use of the phrase "this too shall pass" is not found in the scriptures; yet the gist appears in Romans 5. Similarly, the term "God works in mysterious ways" does not *per se* appear in the scriptures. Yet, the essence of this phrase could emerge by combining Deuteronomy 29:29 and Romans 8:28. This last phrase extrapolated as though believers may not understand the purpose of the circumstances in God's plan. Believers know that details will work for the benefit of those who love the Lord, called according to His purpose.

The fact that the phrase does not appear in the Bible does not mean *ipso facto* that a reader could not extract that meaning from the written words. Yet, it seems that what has

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<sup>403</sup> George H Guthrie, "Inventing Hebrews: Design and Purpose in Ancient Rhetoric," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 3 (2019): 662–665.

happened to the usage of this phrase in warning passages is an extrapolation of meaning not included in the original writings. An expositor must then examine whether the words could fit within the context of the scripts. Based on the exposition of the selected passages, the researcher concluded that the author could not have intended these pericopes as warning routes. But why not?

### **The Word Warning Does Not Appear in Any of the Warning Passages**

The word warning *per se* does not appear in the warning passages or the Epistle to the Hebrews in a futuristic way. In a future sense, the etymology of the word warning can be seen through the ages but predominantly in the Proto-Germanic usage as *warnona*, which means to warn; or take heed.<sup>404</sup> Other languages have assimilated the exact meaning of this word in different forms. As expected, the word's meaning has progressed into what it is today. In linguistic terms, this is called the evolution of the language, and the word warning is no exception.<sup>405</sup> The researcher concluded that the original audience could not have understood any pericopes as warnings since this word, with the connotations of dangers, lacked usage until later during the Proto-Germanic period in the fifth century.<sup>406</sup>

This lack of use does not signify that the meaning of such a warning could not have been inferred nor intended by the author since there are five biblical passages in the book of Hebrews that scholars consider warning paths. However, these passages have a flavor of taking heed about something. Noticeably, the taking heed offered by the author of Hebrews appears historically,

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<sup>404</sup> R. D. Fulk, *A Comparative Grammar of the Early Germanic Languages*, (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2018).

<sup>405</sup> Donald A. Ringe, *A History of English*, vol. 1: *From Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>406</sup> Guss Kroonen, *Etymology Dictionary of Proto-Germanic* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2013).

presented more in a futuristic way. The author was more concerned about giving history lessons than warning about the future. Although Hebrews did not use the word warning, the author intended to warn in a past participle form. Deliberative rhetoricians do this.

### **The Word "Warned" Appears in the Epistle Rhetorically**

As discussed earlier, the author of Hebrews used the word warned and not warning. Other contemporary rhetoricians used the word warning, but again, it did not carry negative connotations when expressing it in its rhetorical sense.<sup>407</sup> Multiple writers would use a hortatory form of the phrase warning, which was more indicative of a persuasive argument than an announcement of an upcoming peril by the message's recipients. The author of Hebrews believed in using the same rhetorical approach.

The first time the word warned was rendered as such by most translations appeared in Hebrews 8:5. The term did not appear as warned by all English<sup>408</sup> translations but as a past warning by the New Living Translation. A past admonished by the King James Version. A past instruction by the Revised Standard Version. But this is not something out of the ordinary. What is remarkable is that ALL English and Spanish translations rendered the word in the past, and none of them have rendered it in the future as an ongoing warning. The version that chose to use warning, the New Living Translation, used the words "gave him this warning," indicating a past action.

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<sup>407</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers 1.1 Epimedes*, LCL 184, p 118-19; Callimachus, *Hymns 6 To Demeter*, LCL 129, p 126-27; Homer, *Homeric Hymns 7 To Dionysus*, LCL 496, p 188-89; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines 1.17 Hippodamia*, LCL 256, p 68.

<sup>408</sup> For a discussion about the fallacies in the English translations see Mark L. Strauss, "Form, Function, and the "Literal Meaning" Fallacy in English Bible Translation," *The Bible Translator* 56, no. 3 (2005): 153-168.

The word *warned* appeared in the book of Hebrews given as *was warned* in the past sense by the New English Translation. Translated as *being warned* in the past by the New American Standard Bible, *being warned* in the past by the King James Version, and *when warned* in the past by the New International Version. Lastly, in Hebrews 12:25, the author used *warned* and rendered as *who warned* in the past by the New American Standard Bible, as *who warned* in the past by the New International Version, and as *who refused* in the past by the King James Version.

This verse has the word twice in some translations and has appeared as *who warns* in a rhetorical sense by the New American Standard Bible, as *who speaks* by the NLT, as *that speaketh* in a rhetorical sense by the King James Version. The researcher noticed that the word *warned* or any of its inflected forms were not used futuristically in any of the English translations available today. Still, they all carried the rhetorical connotation examined herein, which could be another reason for the conclusion that the author was not warning them but encouraging them rhetorically.<sup>409</sup>

Interestingly, in the three verses that the word *warned* appeared in the book of Hebrews, none have a futuristic connotation or perhaps an expectation of retribution from the word itself. Since a futuristic warning would suggest that the author's intention was one of danger encompassed within the message, it cannot conclude that the author was warning anyone but that he was encouraging them. By now, it appears that the author used his rhetorical knowledge to convey this truth in appeal in a deliberative way. But what about apostasy?

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<sup>409</sup> This is the typical back and forth switch between exposition and exhortation described in the outline.

### The Word Apostasy Does Not Appear in the Book of Hebrews

The main peril that any audience in the Book of Hebrews would face is the peril of apostasy. But it is crucial to see that apostasy does not appear in a retributory manner in the book of Hebrews. This word is only applied symbolically with another word. However, it seems inflected in the ἀποστρεφόμενοι (*apostrephomenoi*) with a meaning of escaping in the future only if one rejects. This phrase cannot be counted as an apostasy because it appeared rhetorically. The word ἀποστασία not in the inflected form ἀποστρέφω (*apostrepho*), appears only twice in the NT (Acts 21:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:3). The first time this word appears is to show how the Israelites followed the law of circumcision and now they don't.

The second time attributed to the Son of Perdition as being the one who would again fall away or forsake, or this would be a rhetorical stasis as discussed and compared to the Galatians.<sup>410</sup> In either instance, this apostasy could not have come, as some scholars suggest, to losing anything, but rather, a change in view, precisely what the author of Hebrews was attempting to prevent, a policy decision. This decision was a policy decision of direction conveyed only using deliberative rhetoric by the author of Hebrews, not retribution based on actions. Abstain from sin, abstain from evildoers and embrace suffering. The author emphasized their new faith's perfection rather than their old ways' imperfections. Once again, the author could not have warned them that they would lose something, but they were gaining much more than before. Although the concept may appear several times in the Epistle, the word apostasy, *per se*, does not occur. Again, the better position found by the people of NCP demands a distinction from before.

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<sup>410</sup> Troy W. Martin, "Apostasy to Paganism: The Rhetorical Stasis of the Galatian Controversy," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114, no. 3 (1995): 437–461.

## The Word "παρᾰρρέω" Appears in the Epistle Rhetorically

The first supposed warning passage used this word translated to present a warning; however, a rhetorical interpretation would yield a much different result. The author of Hebrews uses a unique inflection of the word as παρᾰρρυῶμεν (*parapuomen*), a Second Aorist Active Subjunctive Verb. This verb is an action without history or continuation. It would only make sense when viewed in its deliberative rhetorical form presented by a master rhetorician.<sup>411</sup> The problem comes when typically, a subjunctive mood brings about a prohibition when presented in the Aorist form, which is perhaps why the confusion that the author was attempting to warn them.

The only plausible solution to this tension would be to see this word presented in a rhetorical way, not in a literal sense. This solution would not violate the theme that the author of Hebrews presented, which was a better way for them to be. Since the supposed warning in this verse appeared through the rhetorical word μήποτε (*meipote*), a plausible and rational conclusion would be that the verse seems rhetorical—deliberative rhetoric, to be exact. As a result, the author was again not warning them but presenting a rhetorical hortatory.

Masterfully, the author of Hebrews uses a word that no other author in the OT used. The author inflicted as παρᾰπεςόντας (*parapesontas*), presented as an Aorist Active Participle. The author used this word rhetorically and not literarily. Rhetorically, a deliberative writer needed to convey the messages of the old, perhaps as new traditions with new meanings or consequences. However, the author used this dissuasively for liturgical purposes and not in a retributory way. The verses encompassing apostasy talk about the impossibility of a person who tasted good being brought back again in the event of apostasy. If accurate in the literal sense, this would

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<sup>411</sup> Matthew Sigler, "New Traditions and Old Apostasies," *Liturgy (Washington)* 31, no. 1 (2016): 51–57.

contradict Jesus' parables of the lost sheep, coin, and Son. For this reason, Jesus came to earth to save lost people. Nowhere can it be found that He came only for those who will never sin again.

The author of Hebrews was a master at creating new words, much like Paul was. The term ἀποστρεφόμενοι (*apostrephenoi*) was used only once in the NT by him. These words, as inflicted, are a Present Passive Participle that appears to contradict if he warned them of a futuristic turning away. The terms, as used, were presented in a rhetorical sense using deliberative or dissuasive rhetoric to allow the audience. Subsequent readers are to draw a policy decision regarding a newfound faith in Christianity: their new direction.

### **The Author of Hebrews Presented a New Christian Position (NCP)**

The author of Hebrews was presenting better things to the people who used to be known as the Israelites. As well as to the new people called Christians in Antioch for the first time in the NT, as indicated by Acts 11:26.<sup>412</sup> Because of the extensive usage of the word *better*, it is entirely possible that the author was contrasting the former things with better things and not explaining a continuation in retribution as in the OT. But the author had to be careful how to present this position so that both Jewish and Greek cultures could understand this new position.

Since the continual comparison that the author of Hebrews attained in his Epistle, the audience must select a direction, and he was hopeful for this New Christian Position. Realizing that this case is circumstantial at best, perhaps there is a need for further investigation. But now, here are some practical reminders that this research has developed in some areas of interest, mainly the background of Jewish and Greek cultures found within the book of Hebrews, as others do further expositions.

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<sup>412</sup> Justin Taylor, "Why Were the Disciples First Called 'Christians' at Antioch?" (Acts 11, 26) *Revue Biblique* 101, no. 1 (1994): 75–94.

## Hellenism: A Background of the New Testament Writings

In scriptures, the word Hellenistic is found twice in the book of Acts and used with negative connotations or a contrast. The first known use of a verb that meant "to Hellenize" or "ἑλληνίζειν" (*hellenizein*) appeared in the 5th century BC. A similar word in a primary source, "Hellenism," was used in 2 Maccabees.<sup>413</sup> Hellenism was the historical spread of the ancient Greek culture, and people still see the effects of such imposition of culture today, but not to the same extent. Nevertheless, Hellenism was the background in which the NT writers found themselves and the environment of the writer of Hebrews.

Political aspirations (power) vs. religious views (pious) were why some Jews during the Hellenistic period embraced Hellenization while others did not. The Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV, outlawed the Jewish religion under his territory and defiled the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>414</sup> Some assimilated to the new norm, but others did not. Such was the case of Mattathias and his Son, who revolted against the ruler and purified the Temple with a tradition known as Hanukkah.<sup>415</sup> The pride of being a pure Jew versus the protection needed to be a Hellenistic Jew was at the epicenter of the dichotomy. The need for protection was prevalent as the Jews were conquered people, albeit they may have been proud to be Jews; in the hierarchy of needs, protection must have been a particular need during the Hellenistic atmosphere.

Theoretically, a Jew could have embraced various aspects of their Jewish traditions and Greek culture simultaneously, but the peril of keeping a balance was a dangerous proposition at best. On the one hand, the Jews were proud people with a rich religious heritage, and losing such

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<sup>413</sup> Derek Dodson, and Katherine Smith, eds. *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds: A Reader in Historical & Literary Contexts* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 145.

<sup>414</sup> Joel Green, and Lee Martin McDonald, eds. *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 40.

<sup>415</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 40.

would have been detrimental to their way of life.<sup>416</sup> On the other hand, as conquered people, it was imperative to assimilate into the Greek culture to keep the *status quo* of protected people. A puzzle that the Jewish people found themselves repeatedly during the different eras of being conquered.<sup>417</sup> For example, during the Hasmonean period, there were Jews who were unenthusiastic or even hostile to the nationalistic agenda of the Hasmoneans. Here people find the dilemma; however, many Jews joined their cause only when religious rights were at stake.<sup>418</sup> This posture was prevalent for the Jewish people.

The Hasmoneans were as much at war against Hellenizing Jews (who now were joining them) who advocated assimilation and supported the Seleucid plan (which was against the Hasmoneans) to turn Judea into a Greek temple state as against the Seleucids.<sup>419</sup> Such a situation must have been so confusing, but the answer to the postulated problem was possible. Still, it was a daunting task as these opposite sides of the spectrum were ever so present in the lives of the Jewish people. These sides were once again theoretically mutually exclusive but pragmatically were not. A problem between the sides indeed for the once-free people of God. It would be easy for people to speculate whether it was possible to embrace these conflicting ideas. Still, a hindsight response emerges at best unless a person is part of the dichotomy.

The religious group with political aspirations appears to have assimilated Greek culture the best, which can be found in the New Testament as reflected by the presence of Herodians, Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and, inferentially, Essenes.<sup>420</sup> The Hasmoneans stated the age of

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<sup>416</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 399.

<sup>417</sup> Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 403.

<sup>418</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 38.

<sup>419</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 38.

<sup>420</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 39.

diversity for the Jewish people. But it is known that each group offered a different response to the ever-growing apparent problem of Hellenism. The researcher could see that in the Judean Temple, the state under the Persians fractured and led to the formation of rival parties, each offering its response to the challenge of Hellenism.<sup>421</sup>

Miraculously, the one thing that kept these groups (Rabbinic Judaism) despite these adversities was that they kept a monotheistic view during the Hellenistic pressure. This view was prevalent during the period called the period of the "Second Temple" or the "Second Jewish Commonwealth," as indicated by the author.<sup>422</sup> The perils presented to the Second Temple Jewish community were not the same as they would have appeared to the people of today. There is a different and distinct picture of first-century Christianity and the concept that can occur today. The author of Hebrews was addressing in the best possible way, using rhetoric, how to deal with their issues and deal with this unique position bringing the best of both worlds. Again, to accomplish this task, he masterfully used dual rhetoric addressing the needs of both communities, the ethical and the useful ones—a blend of two cultures that now were to be united in direction under one Lordship.

### **Judaism: A Picture of the First Century Christianity**

Some scholars have commented on the community rule (1QS) 11:2–17 in their commentaries.<sup>423</sup> These scholars based their opinion perhaps on a misconception that "first-century Judaism" can be categorized solely on the beliefs of one sect (the Essenes) and not the

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<sup>421</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 127.

<sup>422</sup> Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 400.

<sup>423</sup> Dodson, *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds*, 179.

entire population.<sup>424</sup> They were being mindful of the fact that it is difficult to assess the various tendencies or prejudices of the available "primary" sources (which the readings of the community, as mentioned earlier rule fall under) and what impact these "supposed" biases might have had, especially regarding their accuracy. These scholars may have fallen prey to these supposed biases when stating misleading caricatures related to the Jewish community.<sup>425</sup> Not every Jew was part of either the Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes, and a conclusion that draws from generalizations unsupported by empirical evidence can be dubious at best. This fact has been a central point of contention regarding the "warning passages" in the book of Hebrews.

It is known from other sources that "modern scholars make a distinction between "parties" and "sects" and that "according to this distinction, the Pharisees and Sadducees were parties, but the Essenes were a sect."<sup>426</sup> As noted, the Essenes were not mentioned in the New Testament, but that does not mean their teachings do not appear in Jewish writings. Interestingly, Josephus has been speculated to have been part of the Essenes and other Jewish writers such as Philo.<sup>427</sup> Sects are groups claiming an exclusive right to represent the total people and having exclusive possession of the truth. This fact does not make it a far fetch idea that, because of this "exclusive right" to represent total people, the assertion of a "misleading caricature" is presented as the whole indicative of Jewish beliefs. A reader could obtain a more credible conclusion if a standard deviation applies to the Jewish population versus the three parties, which purportedly proclaimed self-righteousness (at different levels) from which this misleading picture posture appears.

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<sup>424</sup> Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 201.

<sup>425</sup> Dodson, *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds*, 179.

<sup>426</sup> Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 513.

<sup>427</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 621.

Scholars have often pointed out that Judaism was essentially a religion of orthopraxy, which emphasizes correct conduct, both ethical and liturgical, as opposed to faith or grace.<sup>428</sup> The topic of self-righteousness is one of (self) conduct, not fate, as stated by the authors.<sup>429</sup> Similarly, the idea that the three Jewish groups carry the same esoteric agenda is far from empirical, as indicated by the contradiction in the authors who stated that "there were three philosophical sects." This agenda presents the distinctions between sects and parties.<sup>430</sup> The consensus is that "the return from exile and the Hellenization program" was why the sects led the Jews to increased concern over who was a "true Jew" and how to follow the law.<sup>431</sup> These groups developed as a response to that issue, which is far from a misleading picture as postulated by the scholars who believe that the author of Hebrews presented the same image.

Historically, there were two sides of the spectrum regarding Jewish beliefs concerning the law; those who followed it and those who did not. Although the Essenes were a sect that believed in solemnity and rejected pleasure, that was not the overall stance of the Jewish community.<sup>432</sup> Although they thought of the justification as rooted in God's righteousness and mercy, that was not the general stance of the Jewish community.<sup>433</sup> The author of Hebrews must have been familiar with this fact and thus addressed it.

Interestingly, some "interpretations of the law by the Qumran community agree with interpretations given by the Sadducees." Still, the same cannot be said of the Pharisees. As a result, it is false that "a generalization can conclude" that Judaism in the first century was

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<sup>428</sup> Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 201.

<sup>429</sup> Dodson, *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds*, 180.

<sup>430</sup> Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 513.

<sup>431</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 217.

<sup>432</sup> Green, *The World of the New Testament*, 217.

<sup>433</sup> Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 624.

legalistic and promoted self-righteousness, which was misleading or even a picture since the sources from which conclusions appear to be biased. As a result, it is imperative to comprehend that salvation cannot depend on an individual's purity. This fact was the overall presentation to the first audience of this Epistle.

### **The First Century Audience: A Case of First Impression**

Richard Bauckham has presented to the Gospels scholarship a case of first impression (legal case) in the legal community. A first impression is when in a case, the exact issue before the court has not been addressed by that court or within that court's jurisdiction.<sup>434</sup> Remarkably, his presentation can be provocative or pervasive depending on how a person stands on the issue, as a reader can triangulate it to the Epistle of Hebrews quite clearly. This comparison to a legal case is not so that the problem can be considered a "case" or that the audience can appear as "judges" but so that the reader can understand the issue's impact more broadly as it relates to the four Gospels.<sup>435</sup> The point is whether the Gospels were written solely for the community (audiences) where the evangelist who wrote them lived. He proposes that the Gospels were written for all Christians. But were written from a community of faith, and this is the same premise presented in this research. This fact the author of Hebrews must have known; thus, he wrote from a community of faith.

The central thesis presented by Bauckham argues that the current consensus in Gospel scholarship, which gives the four Gospels' communities a key hermeneutical role in interpreting them, is wholly mistaken.<sup>436</sup> He believes that recent scholarship argues that the gospels were

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<sup>434</sup> The legal issue is cover in detail in *Saunders v. Briner*, 334 Conn. 135 (2019).

<sup>435</sup> B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 12.

<sup>436</sup> Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*, 44.

written to a community of faith, not from a community of faith. In support of his thesis, Bauckham brings six "hermeneutical observations," which appeared herein. First, he argues that if the Gospels "do not" address the communities in which they appeared, then those communities must not have a hermeneutical relevance. The strength of this argument comes from the comparison of Paul's epistles which mention the specific communities' "churches" for whom they wrote.<sup>437</sup> As a result, he asserts that there must be a hermeneutical relevance for Paul but not so much for the Gospels, as he makes the comparisons between the four Gospels and Paul's writings quite interesting.

He then expanded on a word he used so many times that people can all envisage that he made the issue redundant. Bauckham argued that few contemporary writers on the Gospel have perhaps diverged from the "dominant" current scholarship "to envisage an implied audience that was much larger and not smaller."<sup>438</sup> He postulates that scholars have not, as far as he could see, discussed in print this envisaged conundrum. This apparent contradiction seems to be the weakness in his argument, which appears to be one of circular reasoning or perhaps a violation of the principle of non-contradiction.<sup>439</sup> He then swiftly made a great point that, although the Gospels have a historical context (and people can study that hermeneutically), that context is not the evangelist's community.<sup>440</sup>

According to Bauckham, the Gospels circulated throughout the first-century Christian church. There is a distinction in how epistles had more hermeneutical relevance to the church

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<sup>437</sup> Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*, 46.

<sup>438</sup> G. N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 45.

<sup>439</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. (Nottingham, England: IVP Academics, 2011), 193.

<sup>440</sup> Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*, 44.

than the Gospels did.<sup>441</sup> Diversity appears within the Gospels, and it did not matter that the Fourth Gospel was different since each evangelist must have known that the people would read his Gospel throughout the church. He mentions a "mistake" made by the consensus view on multiple occasions (that the Gospels were written to a specific audience), or rather "community," and he attributes it to the "misplaced desire," as he calls it, "historical specificity." But he contrasted this mistake with the fact that "no attentive reader can miss the hermeneutical relevance of the church at Corinth to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians," something that did not happen with the Gospels.

Plummer mentions the International Critical Commentary of the Gospel of Luke. To support his theory, He states that although "Luke wrote only for Theophilus," he claims: "It is evident that" Luke wrote it for the instruction and encouragement of all Gentile that has also turned to Christianity as for the original audience.<sup>442</sup> This solid empirical evidence supports his theory quite nicely. The main impetus that catapulted the writing of the Gospels was not the community surrounding the authors but rather the need to share the Gospels with as many people as possible for posterity. Is this possible from the author of Hebrews?

The same is true of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the importance of sharing the Gospels. The last command given by at least two of the four Gospel writers was for them to "share" *vis-à-vis* their writings, the gospel message, and perhaps other forms of "disciple-making." They all felt the urgency to accomplish this. It could not have been done simply for their local community but for their respective communities of faith and the rest of the world from that point forward. This fact substantiates the completed history of the redemption of the people of God. From the

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<sup>441</sup> Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*, 44.

<sup>442</sup> A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), xxxiv.

OT to the NT, now with an NCP in mind and with newfound hope in Christ; the superior human being; the concept of better things; the personification of Jesus' attributes, for all audiences forever!

### Summary

The overall intention of this chapter was to bridge the gap in interpreting the Book of Hebrews. The socio-linguistic approach has proven the correct methodology and the methodology that most closely yields the original author's intention. The chapter started with a description. Next, biblical references were discussed, which covered both OT and NT references. A personal, educational debate was recorded, and explained the reasons for inclusion within the research. Next, the researcher discussed the argument and the application.

Different κρείττων were explained as they related to Christ in all respects. The personifications in the book of Hebrews were discussed to show progression. The researcher highlighted the comparison between the covenant of works and grace. Next, the description of Christ as God's final revelation underscored the finality of God's plan for the Redemption of His people. The finding that the phrase warning passages does not appear in the original language emerges as it relates to the book of Hebrews. Next, the research discussed the word warning in its original form and found that it is not present within warning passages.

The word warned only appears rhetorically, and any potential warnings, if any, were not in a futuristic way but instead in a historical one. Next, a discussion about words such as apostasy, and its inflictions, were explained as they appeared in the Epistle—rhetorically.

The chapter ended with three different historical explanations. First, Hellenism appeared as the background of the book of Hebrews. Then, the researcher contrasted Judaism with the picture of first-century Christianity. Next, the first-century audience appeared as a case of first

impression to show the differences between the cultures. The chapter culminated with an explanation of the subsequent audience. This audience includes all who have read the book of Hebrews—the new Christian community.

It is worth noticing that a new book has been published, since the embarking of this research, that compiles several essays from the experts in the scholarship of the book of Hebrews.<sup>443</sup> The book contextualizes the theology and the hermeneutical approaches other scholars take. In interpreting not only the Book of Hebrews but some of them called warning passages in the Book of Hebrew, the authors try to bring a new position. Although the essays compare other extrabiblical authors of the time, mainly second temple Judaism, they fail to examine the quotes considering the Classical Greek used by the author of Hebrews—which is worth reviewing.

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<sup>443</sup> Ben C Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, Jason Maston, and Harold W. Attridge. *Reading Hebrews in Context: The Sermon and Second Temple Judaism*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023).

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

This research is not a finality. Instead, it is the next logical step in scholarship. Although taking the steps in this study ends the researcher's journey, there are still more paths ahead. This chapter will comprise five parts: 1. Review of Chapters, 2. Summary of Features, 3. Implications of Findings, 4. Contribution to the Field, and 5. Recommendations for Further Research. The goal has been to bring a new methodology and exposition to the otherwise unquestioned "warning passages" in the Book of Hebrews.

### **Review of Chapters**

The first chapter laid down the foundation for the rest of the research. The researcher discussed the phrase "warning passage" trajectory throughout the church's history, including the current state and the four views that have emerged in academia. The researcher then discussed the dichotomy these views created, which presented a problem to be solved by exposition. The thesis followed with the purpose and methodology employed during the exposition. Assumptions and theoretical scope preceded the organization of the research.

The second chapter was a comprehensive review of rhetoric during the Hellenistic time and the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Book of Hebrews. The researcher explored the Classic Rhetoric genres and distinguished the one the author of Hebrews believed to have used. The discussion of the hyperbaton literary tool made it clear that the author of Hebrews was using classical rhetoric to address two audiences, the Jewish and Greek audiences.

Chapter three explained the New Christian Position so that a reader could follow the linear progression of the finding of the NCP. The researcher contrasted the old with the new. In doing so, the researcher emphasized that the author of Hebrews was not recapitulating the covenant formulary formula but rather, a new and improved position for those now in the NCP.

The researcher discussed terminology and explained the need for appeal during this time for the audience of the Book of Hebrews.

Chapter four covered the exposition of the passages selected for this research. The researcher explained both applicational and phonological exposition as well as idiomatic expressions that are present in the Book of Hebrews. The researcher used personal translations of the verses selected, and other Classical Greek authors were quoted during the exposition. An outline of the book revealed the movements that the author of Hebrews attempted to convey and the rationale for selecting the passages.

In chapter five, the researcher discussed different findings peculiar to the author of Hebrew writings. These findings included salvation, human being, faithfulness and mercy, perseverance, the High Priest, eternal redemption, and exhortation, all with the κρείττων descriptive adjective. The researcher discussed personifications and covenants, particularly the covenant of works vs. the covenant of grace. The chapter concluded with how words either appeared or not during the survey of the Book of Hebrews. In this last chapter, the researcher intends to bring it all together.

By now, it is apparent that the trend in current scholarship has designated several pericopes of scriptures in the book of Hebrews as warning passages.<sup>444</sup> This designation has been one primarily because of the sense of a *fortiori* argument presented by the author. Hence,

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<sup>444</sup> The following scholars are but a fraction of the plethora of scholars who have written about the warning passages of Hebrews, see Bateman, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 23–85; Don N. Howell, Jr. "Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 1 (2008): 151; Lars Kierspel and Theological Research Exchange Network, "The Meaning of the Warning Passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews," 2000; Scott C. Powers and Theological Research Exchange Network, "An Analysis of the Warning Passages of Hebrews with a View to the Development of Text-Driven Sermons," *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 2017; Michael J Thate. "Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews," *Trinity Journal* 29, no. 2 (2008): 330; Michael Osladil and Theological Research Exchange Network, "Warning Passages of Hebrews and Historical Background," 2000.

the supposition of a warning.<sup>445</sup> The exposition of the text presented these passages to the audience through the lenses of rhetoricians. Of course, in the Classical Hellenistic period. The author did not ignore, neglect, or compromise the historical presentation in the Epistle (by way of what appeared to be the covenant formulary) nor the rhetorical genre used. The author used deliberative rhetoric to address both audiences: Jewish and Greek Christians. Only by using the socio-linguistic method can an expositor appreciate the significance of this finding.

### **Summary of Features**

This research focused on the exposition of the passages selected using the socio-linguistic approach to bridge the scholarship gap. The implication is that a new position appeared, as presented by the author of Hebrews. This new position was unique in that it contained different and distinct cultures. Thus, a method of interpretation that would consider this fact emerged. The socio-linguistic approach recognizes both needs on a social level, ethical and practical. It focuses on the linguistic part with the deliberative rhetoric that simultaneously addresses both cultures while accentuating a new position that the author of Hebrews was conveying in his writings.

It appears that during the scholarship of the book of Hebrews, no scholar has presented a neutral position, based on the type of rhetoric utilized by the author. As a result, many positions have been presented in order to explain the intended meaning of the author. The author of Hebrews never indicated to the audience that they were in danger, or that warning was necessary as he indicated to them, time and again, the appeal that a new direction for the new community would bring.

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<sup>445</sup> The same type of argumentative logic was predominantly followed from the late 1800's and now in the current era because of a structural analysis of the book of Hebrews, see Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews*, 127 – 33. Research shows that perhaps resulting from Guthrie's structural analysis, the phrase, warning passages, was used more commonly by new and aspiring scholars writing their research. This was truly the inception of a new era of scholarship.

## Nomenclature

The reader can observe some facts by now. First, the author did not use the phrase warning passage in the Epistle except for the word χρηματίζω *chreimatizo*, which appears twice in the final "warning passage," but in a historical sense.<sup>446</sup> Second, the phrase "warning passages" is used because of scholarship. Third, some viewpoints exist because of the now-used warning passages phraseology. All points back to the original premise: these warning passages are shaped by an expression, not in the text. As a result, today's writers focus on the warning passage part, making them fall into categories or pigeonholes.

But, only following the same categorization logic would make this dissertation an *ipse dixit* argument, which would make the dissertation a circular fallacy.<sup>447</sup> Some scholars believe that the author of Hebrews could have used these passages in the Epistle to warn of the danger of someone losing something. If true, a circular argument would make this possible, much like the OT people of God who continually were up and down as it related to their relationship with God. The author of Hebrews could not have presented this if he was espousing better things through Christ.

## Classical Greek and Jewish Rhetoric

The nexus between the usage of Classical Greek and Jewish rhetoric within the book of Hebrews should be evident because of the exposition applicable to the pericopes previously designed by scholars as warning passages. It has emerged that the usage of warning passages was

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<sup>446</sup> Some scholars believe that χρηματίζω (*chreimatizo*) which appears twice in the final warning passage (12:25) seems clear that he was warning them based on God's warnings to ancient Israel but not futuristically; scholars typically take the fifth and final warning to be summative of the others. This concept will be further argued in chapter 3 as it relates to a new position.

<sup>447</sup> William L Dwyer, *Ipse Dixit: How the World Looks to a Federal Judge* (Seattle: University of Washington School of Law, 2007), 27.

a creature of scholarship and that no apostolic father or subsequent writer in eighteen centuries attributed warnings to any of the advancements in the book of Hebrews. Because of the usage of rhetoric, it would have been impracticable for the author of Hebrews to try to warn anyone during this Hellenistic era in biblical times.

More specifically, since the author of Hebrews was aware of both types of rhetoric, he would not have just leaned on one side (Jewish) more than the other (Greek) to convey a new and better promise from God. On the contrary, he used his rhetorical knowledge and applied deliberative rhetoric in order to address both cultures simultaneously. No other biblical author during the first century captured the deliberative rhetoric, nor addressed both cultures in a classical rhetorical way.

### **New Structure in the Book of Hebrews**

Scholarship must have a new structure in the Book of Hebrews. Although the design of the Book of Hebrews is one of complexity, a reader can see that the benefactor secures at least the concept of salvation: the person granting salvation. In other words, the gift of salvation is guaranteed by the same person giving it for free to the clients receiving it. The author shows this better salvation using the concept of reciprocity or patronage, a well-established concept during the Second Temple Judaism and during the OT's times.<sup>448</sup> But more importantly, the author uses the idea of better things, and this is where a warning is not necessary because of the personification of Jesus' attributes.

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<sup>448</sup> Tzvi Novick, "Charity and Reciprocity: Structures of Benevolence in Rabbinic Literature," *The Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 1 (2011;2012;): 33–52; Zachary B. Smith, "Of First fruits and Social Fixtures: How Didache 13 Uses Torah to Reform Roman Patronage," *Early Christianity* 8, no. 2 (2017): 251–268; Douglas Boin, "Hellenistic 'Judaism' and the Social Origins of the 'Pagan-Christian' Debate," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 2 (2014): 167–196.

The reader should not assume that salvation given for free can be regiven or recanted because of the client's actions. That was a premise of the old covenant, which required synergy between the patron-client relationship. As the author puts it, this covenant is better, for it is not contingent upon the performance of the receivers. The author ensured that all the readers or listeners knew this covenant was better than the first one. This covenant in Christ had eternal consequences and had better terms for the recipients; mainly, the benefactor had to consummate all the terms of the covenant, unlike previous ones.<sup>449</sup> As a result, the author conveys from the start the finality of God's revelation and the process by which God made sure of the finality of this new revelation through Christ, the concept of better things, or the personification of better qualities in the new covenant. If a reader is to remember anything after reading this research, before the reader leaves, it would be this, "If a reader cannot remember anything else said, it would be good to remember that exhortation is a better word than a warning." Leaders should encourage rather than warn their ministry members; that's the NCP way.

### **Expositional Possibilities**

The socio-linguistic method, as excellent as it was to prove the contents of this research, is not the end. In other words, the same methodology could emerge with different types of writing. These types of writings could be apocalyptic literature, NT Apocrypha, or even deuterocanonical, to mention a few. The goal would be to see if the socio-linguistic method

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<sup>449</sup> The new covenant is unlike the old covenant where there was a condition attached to it, the author made sure to let the readers know the unconditionality of the new covenant for the NCP, see Gert J. C. Jordaan, "Some Reflections on the 'new Covenant' in Hebrews 12:24," In *Die Skriflig: Tydskrif Van Die Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 50, no. 4 (2016): 1–8; Kenneth A. Vandergriff, "New Covenant as Jewish Apocalypticism in Hebrews 8," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2017): 97; Margaret Mollett, "Revelation: A New Covenant Commentary by Gordon D. Fee (Review)," *Neotestamentica* 49, no. 1 (2015): 192–94; Amy Erickson, "The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant: A (Not-so) New Model of the Atonement, Michael J. Gorman, James Clarke, 2014 Reviews," *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 24, no. 1 (2017): 101–103.

would yield different interpretations of these writings. For example, for the apostle John—this would be John's linguistic or socio-Johannine community.

For the apostle Paul—this would be the Pauline community. Would the same method apply to other types of communities? For example, the Dead Sea, Palestine, or other districts of the first century. The socio-linguistic method of hermeneutics could apply to Johannine, Pauline, and other NT writings that cover topics such as love, society, the "we" problem, Christology, and others. All these NT writers had a linguistic side and a community side while they were writing. Paul's writings, for example, had a rhetorical approach when he wrote the churches. In essence, now should not be the time to quit. This nuance needs exploration.

### The Implication of These Findings

Rhetorically speaking, the audience can obtain a futuristic expectation without the peril of retribution. But only when making a policy decision. This decision would have an implication for the past and future with deliberative rhetoric. In this sense, the rhetorician is kind of an advisor σύμβουλος (*sumboulos*) of either exhortation προτροπή (*protopei*) or dissuasion αποτροπή (*apotropēi*).<sup>450</sup> Coincidentally, a deliberative speaker advises for or against a course of action and does not warn of retribution if the course of action is not taken. The deliberative speaker gives direction (*emphasis added*) to the person listening to the rhetorical message. Only the epidemic or judicial speaker would bring this type of negative retribution because of the prior action taken, and if so, the author would not have used better things to show a contrast.

A hypothetical may be beneficial to clarify this concept, much like when a student asks a rhetorical question. The student does not suffer retribution if the answer is not given. The student

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<sup>450</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 182.

benefits from the professor's knowledge, regardless of whether the postulation of the question answers the question. Whether the student answers the question is irrelevant. Similarly, the author of Hebrews, the professor, then conveyed his rhetorical knowledge to the audience or the students. Whether they answered the question rhetorically or not, they benefited from it. In other words, the audience would not have any retribution (apostasy) but the knowledge of what happened in the past and compare it with what appears in Christ, the typology or personification of better things.

### **Contributions to the Field**

This research has contributed to the understanding that the author of Hebrews was solely indicating to his audience, through deliberative rhetoric, the better things in Christ Jesus. As a result, it can be said that if items are better, they are not to be seen as they were in the past or as a recapitulation of things to come for people of faith. The author of Hebrews covered seven different types of better things in the typology or personification of better things. These better things, "κρείττων": Salvation; Human Being; Faithfulness and Mercy; Perseverance; High Priest; Eternal Redemption; and Exhortation, were all centered in the person of Christ.

The researcher undertook this research because the current trend has shown a need for fresh and new exposition related to the pericopes found in the book of Hebrews; otherwise, the pigeonhole created by scholarship could never disappear. This fresh and new exposition emerged to understand the Book of Hebrews properly. The author wrote a book with two cultures in mind: Greek and Jewish. These cultures were amidst the Hellenistic period. An expositor cannot overlook this fact for the proper interpretation.

On the Greek side, this research has identified and applied the author's usage of the same Classical Greek tools that were contemporary to other rhetoricians of the time. On the Jewish

side, this research has identified that the covenant formulary used in the OT was not the same used in the Book of Hebrews. This research has shown that the author of Hebrews intended a new position in Christ, described as the NCP. The socio-linguistical method was applied to the allusions, quotations, or echoes inserted adequately within the book, and the researcher discussed the distinction of the dual rhetoric employed by the author of Hebrews. The author did not intend to show a continuation or recapitulation of the last things. Instead, the author showed better things in Christ through the excellent use of typologies and personifications.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

This study has argued that the author of Hebrews framed better things or the new covenant *vis à vis* the typology of better things around the person or personification of accomplishments of Christ. Perhaps the exposition of further passages in the Epistle would yield the same results, thus mitigating the need to call warning passages. However, the words themselves do not appear within any of the pericopes found in the book. As the exposition has revealed that the message was given as exhortations and not as warnings, it would be helpful for other scholars to augment this new conversation after carefully examining the postulated solutions to the problems found within the currents of biblical literature.

Scholars of both sides of the dichotomy should jump into the opportunity to correct the emergence of new exposition relating to the book of Hebrews to unify this otherwise diverse group of scholars fighting for their respective corners. In other words, there must be more to this universal dichotomy concerning "status" if it was obtained better by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. A reader could further explore the subject matter of better things simply by surveying other contemporaneous classical Greek rhetoricians. Perhaps different cultures were touched by

the Hellenization of Greek rhetorical thinking. Analyzing the proper usage of the particular words identified within this research could be helpful.

Both Greek and Hebrew scholars should further investigate the translation of the passages selected. This investigation was to see if any departure from the proper semantic range was called for or even necessary and not just another attempt to enter the conversation. The goal must always be the appropriate interpretation and exposition. In this case, the renaming of the warning passages in the book of Hebrews for over two centuries in academia. Academia must review the socio-linguistic methodology and findings of fresh content.

In this way, disagreements from different interpretative camps could be harmonized. For example, perhaps the concept of covenant theology could be juxtaposed with dispensationalism. When these concepts can emerge from the perspective of those who wrote them—not dismissing the strengths and weaknesses of both sides—remembering that God uses what He pleases, perhaps understanding why. God has dealt with His creation through covenants and His design equally through dispensations. Similarly, God has used retribution in the past for disobedience, but God sent His only Son so that He said His better things could deal with disobedience. Progression of the redemptive plan of God mandates that something better not only replaces the former but also complements the latter, and this dual rhetoric does just that: it gives the direction of purpose. All ministers in the church today need the same advice.

The socio-linguistic hermeneutical methodology should apply to other writings, communities, and authors to see if the same trajectory of direction, rather than destination, is found within other authors and writings. Because Jesus changed the paradigm of things as usual, the idea of a better position is not far-fetched. The rhetorical genre of dissuasion simultaneously with exhortation should emerge in other NT books, particularly with those who spend three years

with Jesus. On multiple occasions, Jesus said, "You have heard it was said...but I say to you," indicative of something new. Something new is a New Christian Position only found in Jesus, not traditions, regulations, or interpretations. The church will benefit by knowing this position.

Numerous other areas would benefit from having a better position. When asked how Jesus is found, it is apparent that two sides of a spectrum exist. Some believe that "people" find Jesus, and others believe that Jesus finds "people." Equally, as discussed herein, there are two sides of a spectrum, and exposition should merge the two. Here is the logical conclusion that connects both sides regarding finding Jesus. Whether they believe that "people" find Jesus or believe that Jesus finds "people," there is good news. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Similarly, God loves us so much that He sent a better agreement with His creation. May God help all come to a unifying position so His people may thoroughly enjoy this *New Christian Position* in Christ. The hybrid methodology should apply to other NT books and studies.

## APPENDIX

The following scholars are not part of the scholars that formed part of *The Four Views* on the warning passages of Hebrews, but they have strong scholarship concerning warning passages in the book of Hebrews. Even though they are not part of the original five scholars with the different four views and responses to these views, these scholars have influences that reach far into the community, not just academia, hence the reason for the inclusion in this appendix. The selection of these or any other scholars is not for argument's sake, but for correlation within their studies.

### **Craig R. Koester**

One of three scholars discussed on one side of the spectrum. Koester acknowledges "tension" when it comes to the interpretation of the warning passages, specifically, the tension between "what God has promised and accomplished through Christ, and the need to heed the warnings given in the Epistle to the Hebrews."<sup>451</sup> Also, Koester agrees that there is a "rhetorical function" that the author of the book of Hebrews is utilizing.<sup>452</sup> But Koester does not take into consideration the rhetorical variance in which the author of Hebrews places himself amidst those who would be admonished, which would be implicative of the author of Hebrews losing his salvation. As a result, there is a subtle implication that God's promises may be contingent upon the clients' obedience, which runs the risk of the synergism indicated herein.

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<sup>451</sup> Craig R. Koester, *God's Purposes and Christ's Saving Work According to Hebrews*, 374–75. For an exhaustive study between the two types of eschatology see David H. Wenkel, "Kingship and Thrones for All Christians: Paul's Inaugurated Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 4–6," *Expository Times* 128, no. 2 (2016): 63–71; Galen B. Yorba-Gray, "Don Quixote Till Kingdom Come: The (Un)Realized Eschatology of Miguel De Unamuno," *Christianity & Literature* 54, no. 2 (2005): 165–182.

<sup>452</sup> Koester, *God's Purpose and Christ's Saving*, 324.

His position would answer the question regarding what the danger is. But this would be more a form of epideictic rhetoric if that was the case.<sup>453</sup> Besides, there is no distinction in Koester's eschatology between realized eschatology and futurist eschatology.<sup>454</sup> If true, this logic would follow that the author of Hebrews must have been using the epideictic genre of rhetoric, akin to the ANE prophetic rhetoric or OT prophets would have used to get the desired result. However, it does not necessarily solve the tension within the Epistle if the author was presenting his audience better things. In other words, there is still the possibility for someone, based on this tension, that the presentation of "better things" is not necessarily better things but a recapitulation of the same if this tension is not solved.

### David A. DeSilva

David DeSilva, the second scholar is mentioned elsewhere, and there is a need to spend some time attempting to explain his position regarding his synergistic soteriology.<sup>455</sup> DeSilva argues that because of the apparent warnings of the letter in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the doctrine of eternal security must have been far from the author's mind, unlike contemporary debates on the matter. Equally absent from the author's mind were the modern theological topics such as losing salvation and eternal security.<sup>456</sup> If the author was genuinely a Hellenistic Jew,

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<sup>453</sup> The different types of rhetoric will be explained in chapter two.

<sup>454</sup> Graham Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 70.

<sup>455</sup> DeSilva classifies the "apostasy" perhaps as the "unpardonable sin" and thus the need for the author of Hebrews of a warning to the audience of the Hebrews. This is as cited by Christopher Wade Cowan, "Confident of Better Things:" Assurance of Salvation in the Letter to the Hebrews." (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2012), 9; J.B. Rowell as cited by Lars Kierspel and Theological Research Exchange Network, "The Meaning of the Warning Passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews," (2000), 14; who shares the same view as Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 608–9, arguing for a person that has reached a state of obduracy that can never be forgiven; As you can see, there is no "eternal security" by neither of these scholars or their progeny, which appears to be contradictory to what the rest of the canon is teaching.

<sup>456</sup> David Arthur DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000), 240–45.

then he likely would not have thought in terms of medieval existentialist philosophical categories. He likely thought in terms of Hebraic “function” categories, that is, using fiery rhetoric for the function of persevering or “disciplining” his Hebrew saints.

Coincidentally, he opines that "the author's intended impact is pushed out of central focus," when perhaps people focus the interpretation with these topics in mind. In addition, he indicates that the author of Hebrews "wanted the recipients to respond honorably and return fully to God" and perhaps remain "grateful for the benefits that God has granted them," which would, in turn, convince them that "a violation of the beauty of reciprocity between God and human beings would be unthinkable." This, among other things, would give a lot of synergetic power to the clients and not the benefactor if the logic is to be followed.

DeSilva brings the idea that God used the author of Hebrews to restore the sense of goodwill between God and his people by using alternative methods of appeal: appeal to fear (warning) and appeal to confidence (exhortation).<sup>457</sup> But if true, this proposition not only would negate the need for a Savior since God can be dependent upon the clients to obey, thereby nullifying the need for a warning or *vice versa*, but would also mitigate the doctrine of perseverance presented by the concept of better things within the Epistle. It is believed that responsible exposition calls for a better determination of the fluctuation between *exposition* and *exhortation*, not between *warning* and *exhortation*, as DeSilva has suggested.

Interestingly, in his "socio-rhetorical commentary," DeSilva considers Hebrews based on the social institution of reciprocity, which by all intended purposes is "the mutual expectations and obligations of patrons and clients," that was a "mainstay of first-century life," which must have been in both Jewish-Hellenistic and Greco-Roman cultures. He especially looks to the

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<sup>457</sup> DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 245.

contemporary writings of Seneca and Dio Chrysostom as resources on patronage in the ancient world. Still, he does not look at any other classical rhetorical Greek writers concerning the rhetorical style of communications in the first century, particularly with such a complex mixture of cultures.<sup>458</sup> As a result, the argument presented by DeSilva perhaps does not appear to be comprehensive.

In his view, clients can only be perfected once cleansed from the defilement of sin and sanctified when they move to the "state of being holy."<sup>459</sup> The question comes, isn't this what the author of Hebrews was presenting in Christ? In DeSilva's view, final salvation is a reward for obedience and dependence, not on the benefactor, but the client's performance, which appears to have retributory factors attached to it. As a result, a person gets salvation employing works, not by grace; there is no other way to put it. An epideictic rhetorical argument is presented by this scholar but not putting the cart before the horse.

### **William L. Lane**

William Lane, out of the three scholars mentioned from the view that a person can lose something, there is the most agreement with Lane as he stated, "The result of Christ's sacrifice was the definitive consecration of the redeemed community to the service of God" so that "every obstacle to fellowship with God has been effectively removed." Yet, he simply makes an assertion contrary to the teachings of the book of Hebrews in that he states, "Those who once were cleansed and consecrated to God can become reinfected with a permanent defilement that

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<sup>458</sup> For more works based on this author pervasive views see, David A. DeSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 152 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995). Idem, "Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Client Relationships," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 91-116. For an analysis and critique of pervasive view of the ancient reciprocity systems, see Jason A. Whitlark, *Enabling Fidelity to God: Perseverance in Hebrews considering the Reciprocity Systems of the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008).

<sup>459</sup> DeSilva, *Patronage, Eternal Security, and Second Repentance*, 200-02.

cannot be purged," and is based on his interpretation of Hebrews 10:29.<sup>460</sup> A dichotomy exists in his view and his understanding, which would be a form of epideictic rhetoric utilized by the author of Hebrews if not corrected.<sup>461</sup>

### **Thomas R. Schreiner**

Thomas Schreiner is the first scholar on the other side of the spectrum. Schreiner's categories are better synthesized as: (1) The Loss of Salvation View—the potential to truly apostatize, (2) Loss of Reward, strong language warning against loss of eschatological rewards for faithfulness, (3) Test of Genuineness, good works are the necessary evidence of genuine salvation, (4) Hypothetical View, the warning language, though real, is only hypothetical and thus illusory, serving only a rhetorical purpose, (5) Dialectical Tension, the believer should take both the warnings and assurances equally seriously, not being able to escape an “already-not-yet” reality in the present life, (6) The Means of Salvation View, the warnings are real, the exhortations carry weight, but the graphic language is how God does preserve the saint.

According to Schreiner, these works are the outgrowth of grace, not meritorious of it. This is the main view held by the proponents of eternal security. He brings an interesting discussion in answering an essay by William L. Craig in relation to the middle knowledge perspective on perseverance of the saints.<sup>462</sup> Like all these other scholars, their arguments come

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<sup>460</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 267.

<sup>461</sup> Although scholars agree that there are rhetorical factors within the book of Hebrews, not all scholars have agreed that the rhetorical arguments presented are in the deliberative form but rather, by implication in either the epideictic or forensic form, these warning passages were to have the same function as the covenant formulary of the OT.

<sup>462</sup> William L. Craig, “Lest Anyone Should Fall: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29 (1991): 65–74.

from theological explanations, rather than from exposition of the original languages in which the author of Hebrews operated during his homiletical message.

### **Donald A. Hagner**

Hagner is the second scholar on the same side of the spectrum as Schreiner. In the same manner as Schreiner, he uses the language of apostasy from the author of Hebrews, with what appears to be a “strong emphasis,” on security. He does not see a problem with calling them warnings. He opines that Christian hope is secured since people enter the very presence of God.<sup>463</sup> He believes that these warnings do not prove that any of the addressed will apostatize, but rather, that the use of them as *means* is essential to prevent them from committing this sin.

### **Gerald L. Borchert**

Borchert is the final scholar discussed. He attempts to strike a delicate balance between *Assurance and Warning* within the NT scholarship. His method is quite unique as he analyzes the NT in segments: 1) Epistles, 2) Gospels, and 3) Sermons with Hebrews following this last part. He describes a “sensitive balance” when the author of Hebrews attempts to convey a new Christian definition, not found anywhere else in the NT. Although he discusses assurance in the book of Hebrews, presumably the author was not concerned, according to Borchert, with the ultimate salvation, since his intention was not in solving any tension.<sup>464</sup> Perhaps this assurance is regarding one’s own perseverance in the race, this is still unclear based on his position.

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<sup>463</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 98.

<sup>464</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *Assurance and Warning*, “The balance between assurance and warning in Hebrews is very delicate” (194), 160.

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