

**Hebrews and the Scriptures: The use of  
Ps 95:7b-11 and Genesis 2:2b in Hebrews 3-4**

**Hebreus e as Escrituras: o uso do Salmo 95,7b-11  
e Gênesis 2,2b em Hebreus 3,7-4,13**

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**ABSTRACT**

The use of the Jewish Scriptures and the references to their texts and traditions make up a network of intertextuality which must be considered when we read the Epistle to the Hebrews. In this regard, this paper proposes to demonstrate how Ps 95,7b-11 and Gen 2,2b are used in Heb 3-4. From the first text, Ps 95,7b-11, Hebrews uses the incident of Meribah and Massah, the quintessential rebellion of the Exodus generation, as a paradigm for a warning to its addressees, that is, the current people of God who are in a situation analogous to that of the Exodus generation, as both are Exodus communities wandering through the wilderness. The warning is brought to a new stage in 4,1-13, where the text highlights the Christian community is heir to the promise of God's rest. The effectiveness of the promise of rest and the need the current generation has to enter it are established by the juxtaposition of the quotation of Ps 95,11 and Gen 2,2b.

**KEYWORDS**

Jewish Scriptures. The Epistle to the Hebrews. Intertextuality.

**RESUMO**

O uso das Escrituras Judaicas (LXX) e as referências aos seus textos e tradições constituem uma rede de intertextualidade que devem ser consideradas na leitura da Epístola aos Hebreus. Neste sentido, a proposta

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deste artigo é demonstrar como se dá o uso do Salmo 95,7b-11 e de Gênesis 2,2b em Hebreus 3-4. Do primeiro texto, Salmo 95,7b-11, Hebreus utiliza o incidente de *Meribah* e *Massah*, a rebelião essencial da geração do êxodo, como paradigma para a exortação aos seus destinatários, isto é, o povo de Deus atual que se encontra numa situação análoga à geração do êxodo, pois ambos são comunidades do êxodo em seu período de peregrinação no deserto. A exortação é levada a um novo estágio em 4,1-13, texto que destaca que a comunidade cristã é herdeira da promessa de descanso e a necessidade de a geração atual entrar nele é estabelecida pela justaposição da citação do Salmo 95,11 e Gênesis 2,2b.

### **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Escrituras Judaicas. Epístola aos Hebreus. Intertextualidade.

A striking characteristic in the Epistle to the Hebrews is that it continuously features quotations, echoes and references to institutions, events and people from the Jewish Scriptures. The use of the Jewish Scriptures expresses the conviction there is a continuum between God's "talk" and "action" in the past and in the present; and the references to their texts and traditions make up a network of intertextuality which must be taken into account when we read them: the language of the Jewish Scriptures emerges in the Epistle to the Hebrews in a constant process of creating and re-attributing new meanings to the texts that are mentioned. In this regard, considering that a text is a voice in a dialogue with other texts, but which also functions as an echo of the voices of its time, of the history of a social group, their values, beliefs, etc; and also inquiring into the way the Epistle to the Hebrews approaches the Jewish Scriptures, this paper proposes to demonstrate how Ps 95,7b-11 and Gen 2,2b are used in Heb 3-4, a text in which the interpretation of the Scriptures is aimed mainly to provide a rationale for a warning, whose underlying theme – the "rest" – is presented with the generation of the desert as a background, that is, "those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses", but "sinned", and "whose bodies fell in the wilderness".

From the first text, Ps 95,7b-11, Hebrews uses the incident of Meribah and Massah, the quintessential rebellion of the Exodus generation,

as a paradigm for a warning to its addressees, that is, the current people of God who are in a situation analogous to that of the Exodus generation, as both are Exodus communities wandering through the wilderness. The warning is brought to a new stage in 4,1-13, where the text highlights the Christian community is heir to the promise of God's rest. The effectiveness of the promise of rest and the need the current generation has to enter it are established by the juxtaposition of the quotation of Ps 95,11 and Gen 2,2b, which features two lines of reasoning. The first of them takes us back to the time before the generation of the desert, to the creation. The text stresses "God's rest in creation", identifies it with the rest mentioned in Ps 95, and seeks to show the "rest" was originated after the creation of the world, that is, the "rest" the Israelites fell short of because of their unbelief and disobedience, and which is now available to the Christian community, had already existed since the moment God finished the creation of the world. The second line of reasoning sets a distinction between the promised rest and the entering into Canaan, stating that Joshua led the people of Israel to the Promised Land, but he did not give them a permanent rest. The rest given by Joshua to the Israelites does not abrogate the promise, as Ps 95 repeated it to those living in its time. From the unfinished nature of the promise, we infer "a sabbath rest still remaining for the people of God" (4,9) must have some characteristic missing in the rest achieved in Joshua's time. The current people of God are in a situation that is analogous to that of the exodus generation. Both are exodus communities in their periods of pilgrimage through the desert.

### **Ps 95,7b-11 in Heb 3,7-4,13**

Heb 3,7-4,13 is formally a Midrash built upon Ps 95,7b-11 and Genesis 2,2. The text preceding it, the comparison between Jesus and Moses (3,1-6), signals the faithfulness of Jesus, "the apostle and high priest of our confession", and the identity of the addressees of Hebrews as "brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling", and "God's house" (3,1.6). Heb 3,7-4,13 develops the section by establishing the relationship between its addressees and Christ in a very complex way: it compares the generation of the exodus, under Moses to the current

people of God, presenting them as a pilgrim community led by Christ on their way to the heavenly rest. In this text, Ps 95 (LXX 94) – already used in the cult of the synagogue<sup>2</sup> and introduced through the expression: “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says” (3,7a)<sup>3</sup> – has as its main theme the creation and recreation, a language used in the Old Testament to describe the saving acts of God.

In fact, Ps 95, which is about the creation as a reason for worshipping God (v. 1-5); and about another creation, the exodus, which also inspires the faithful to worship (v.6-7a), and finishes with a warning against unbelief, built from the incident of Meribah and Massah (v.7b-11)<sup>4</sup>, features a juxtaposition between creation and exodus. Isa 43,14-17, a passage located in a context with a strong image of the exodus, also states God is the “creator of Israel” and the explicit reference to the passage through the sea shows there is a tradition which sees the exodus as an act of creation. Isa 43,14-17 is important not only because it presents a connection between the exodus and the creation, but also between creation, exodus and the return from Babylon, which in its turn is presented as a second exodus. The juxtaposition between the exodus and the return from Babylon shows they follow the paradigm of recreation, and thus a connection between recreation and redemption is established, since in this text redemption means the return from Babylon<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> BRUCE, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, p. 63; LANE, William L. *Hebrews 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Book, Publisher, 1991, p. 85; ATTRIDGE, H. W. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989, p. 129, n. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Pointing out that “God spoke” is common in Hebrews, as seen in the following references: 1,1-2.5-13; 2,1-4; 3,7-11.15-18; 4,2-3.12; 5,5-6; 6,13.17; 7,21; 8,8-13; 9,8; 10,5-7.15-17; 12,25-26.

<sup>4</sup> GIRARD, Marc. “The Literary Structure of the Ps 95”. *Theological Digest* 30, 1982, p. 55-58; ENNS, Peter E. “Creation and Re-Creation: Ps 95 and Its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1-4:13”. *WTJ* 55, 1993, p. 258-259.

<sup>5</sup> Ex 15,16; Hos 8,13-14; Isa 44,2.24; 45,9-13; 48,20-21; 54,5. Isa 48,20-21 juxtaposes the return from Babylon and the Exodus, in a clear reference to Meribah and Massah. The return from Babylon is presented as a second Exodus. The first and the second Exodus are connected, and both are acts of redemption and recreation. See Peter E. Enns, “Creation and Re-Creation”, 259-260; HAAG, Ernst. “Deus Criador e Deus Salvador na Profecia de Dêutero-Isaías”. In: *Deus no Antigo Testamento*. São Paulo: ASTE, 1981, p. 261-290.

Besides juxtaposing the language of creation and the exodus, the language of shepherding present in the Psalm – “For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!” – is also related to the theme of creation and recreation. The connection between the language of shepherding and deliverance is common in the Scripture. Hosea says the deliverance from Egypt was an act like that of a shepherd: “By a prophet the Lord brought Israel up from the Egypt, and by a prophet he was guarded” (Hos 12,13). In Num 27,15-17, God blames Moses for hitting the rock when he commanded him to speak to it (Num 20,1-8). This passage does not have the actual event of exodus as a specific context, but the image of shepherding is relevant, as Moses, the shepherd, was the one leading the Israelites out of Egypt<sup>6</sup>. In this regard, the connection between the exodus and the return from Babylon, two events expressing the saving activity of God, and the images of shepherding, are relevant to the thematic development of Ps 95. It is a psalm of the exodus, and its unity is established by the theme of creation and recreation. Its thematic progression goes from creation to recreation, and from cosmic to personal. Its second part makes the exodus connection more explicit, but the use of the incident of Meribah and Massah (v.7b-11) is significant as a paradigm for the warning, as it is the quintessential rebellion of the Exodus generation, the people of the second creation<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> ENNS, 1993, p. 261-263.

<sup>7</sup> The mention of the rebellion of the generation of the Exodus derives from the citation of Ps 95 and the account of Num 14 (LXX) and par. (Num 32,7-15; Deut 1,19-46). Hebrews does not mention two other incidents of the history of Israel from the pilgrimage period, hinted at by the words Meribah (“strife”) and Massah (“proving”, “temptation”). Meribah and Massah remind of the rebellion in Rephidim, which Moses called Meribah and Massah, because the Israelites quarrelled with God because of the lack of water, and tested Him (Ex 17,1-7). The word Meribah also occurs in the similar event in Kadesh, an event known as waters of Meribah, because there the Israelites quarrelled again with God because of the lack of water (Num 20,1-13). The only mention to this lapse we find related to Meribah and Massah is attributed to Moses, excluded from the Promised Land because he did not trust God enough to honor Him as holy in the event of the waters of Meribah (Num 20,12; 27,14; Deut 32,51; Ps 106 [LXX 105] 32). Hebrews does not blame Moses, because that would not be appropriate to the preceding context, which, in developing the discussion on the rest, highlights Moses and Christ as a paradigm of faithfulness, in contrast to the unfaithfulness of those he led out of Egypt. See ENNS, 1993, p. 263-264; LESCHERT,

Establishing the thematic unity of Psalm 95 is precisely what grounds the way it is used in Heb 3,7-4,13. The themes of creation and re-creation become motives of worship and warning. Hebrews addresses this warning to its recipients by saying the people of God is in a situation analogous to that of the generation of the Exodus: both are exodus communities in their periods of pilgrimage through the desert. To successfully achieve his goal, the author of Hebrews makes some changes in the citation of the Psalm. Besides introducing the citation of the Psalm with “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says” (3,7a) and making a correction and phonetic adaptations<sup>8</sup>, the text of Hebrews presents four considerable changes, which can be seen in the comparison below:

Ps 95,7b-11 (LXX)	Heb 3,7-11
7b σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε	7 Διό, καθὼς λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε,
8 Μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ	8 μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ,
9 οὐδ' ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐδοκίμασαν καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου	9 οὐδ' ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου
10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκεῖνη καὶ εἶπα ἅει πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ αὐτοὶ Οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου	10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη διὸ Προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον, Ἄει πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ, αὐτοὶ δὲ Οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου,
11 ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.	12 ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.

D. *Hermeneutical Foundations of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. A Study in the Validity of its Interpretation of some core Citations from the Psalms. Thesis. Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991, p. 154-163; VANHOYE, A. “Longue marche ou accès tout proche? Le contexte biblique de Hébr. 3,7-4,11”. *Biblica* 49, 1968, p. 18-21.

<sup>8</sup> The use of εἶδον (“saw”: v. 9), not only corrects the use of εἶδον of the Septuagint, but also combines rhythmically with εἶπον (“said”: v.10). The use of τεσσαράκοντα (v.10), and not τεσσαράκοντα, as in the Septuagint, is an alternative orthographic form. In its turn, the change from εἶπα (first aorist) to εἶπον (second aorist) combines rhythmically with εἶδον, from the previous phrase, avoiding the hiatus of the Septuagint.

The first change is in the use of the prepositional phrase ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ (“in proving”: v. 9), in the place of the verbal form ἐδοκίμασαν (they tried” – LXX)<sup>9</sup>. The use of the expression ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ also keeps the name in Meribah (TM), but Hebrews, which follows the LXX, interprets the events of Meribah and Massah mainly as abstract concepts: παραπικρασμός (“provocation”) and πειρασμός (“temptation”, “proving”), identifying the sin of the people as disobedience (3,18-19)<sup>10</sup>. The change from ἐδοκίμασαν to ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ also builds on the oral effect of the repetition of v. 8, as each line finishes with ἐν, and a noun: ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ/ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ/ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ.

The second change is the insertion of διὸ (“therefore”: v.10), after τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη (“forty years”), which starts the following clause: διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον (“Therefore I was angry with that generation, and I said”). The forty years which the Septuagint refers to as the anger of God are related to the fact the Israelites tested God and saw his work for forty years. Thus, the use of “therefore” is fundamental for developing the argumentation of Hebrews as it points out the Israelites saw and tested the works of God for forty years (3,9). Hebrews 3,17, however, affirms: “But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned”, thus making the period of proving parallel and simultaneous with the period of the anger of God<sup>11</sup>.

The third change is the substitution of τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ (“that generation”) for τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ (“this generation”: v. 10). Such change seeks to update the exodus experience for the addressees of Hebrews and show God’s concern with the current generation. In fact, the change from “that”, which refers to something remote, to “this”, brings the text closer to the time of the addressees because of the explicit connections between the historic example and the current situation of the Christian community.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews is also different from the Masoretic Text, which uses “they tempted me”.

<sup>10</sup> LANE, 1981, p. 85; THOMAS, K. J. “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”. *NTS* 11, 1964-1965, p. 307-308; SCHRÖGER, F. *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*. Biblische Untersuchungen 4. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet 1968, p. 102; MCCOLLOUGH, J. M. “The OT Quotations in Hebrews”. *NTS* 26, 1980-1981, p. 369-371.

<sup>11</sup> ATTRIDGE, 1989, p. 115; MCCOLLOUGH, 1980-1981, p. 371-372; SCHRÖGER, 1968, p. 103.



The change takes place also because of the phonetic assonance with ζτή, from the previous clause: τεσσαράκοντα ζτη (“forty years”). As this change involves the current recipients of Hebrews, it strengthens the argument that is presented, and involves the mentioned phonetic assonance<sup>12</sup>.

The fourth change, the substitution of καὶ (“and”) with the adversative and copulative conjunction δὲ (“therefore” – v. 10), stresses the criticism of the generation who tested God in the desert<sup>13</sup>.

The changes made when quoting Psalm 95 are important because they are in line with the purpose of Hebrews, which is updating the psalm and making it relevant to its addressees. Thus, Hebrews 3,12-19 develops a warning with the rebellion of the generation of the desert as a background and addresses the warning of Ps 95 to its own generation. The text presents the reasons which prevented the generation of the desert from entering God’s rest. It highlights their unbelief and the fact they hardened their hearts, that is, their refusal of believing, trusting, and responding to God or His word (3,12.15.19; 4:6.11)<sup>14</sup>. The Israelites did not enter God’s rest because they rebelled: “they who heard and yet were rebellious”, “those who sinned” and “those who were disobedient” (3,16.17.18)<sup>15</sup>.

Hebrews also states its readers must “hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope” (3,6) and “hold our first confidence firm to the end” (3,14). The appeal “to hold firm” is in contrast with the danger of turning away (4,12). “To the end” marks the limit to the required faithfulness, but “today” concerns the concrete nature of the end (τέλος)

<sup>12</sup> SCHRÖGER, 1968, p. 102-103; ELLINGWORTH, P. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. The International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993, p. 218; MCCOLLOUGH, 1980-1981, p. 371; JOBES, Karen H. “Rhetorical Achievement in the Hebrews 10 ‘Misquote’ of Ps 40”. *Biblica* 72, 1991, p. 391-392.

<sup>13</sup> SCHRÖGER, 1968, p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> KATZ, Peter. “The Quotations from Deuteronomy in Hebrews”. *ZNW* 49, 1958, p. 213-223; ATTRIDGE, 1989, p. 116; HUGHES, Philip E. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993, p. 145,148; BRUCE, 1964, p. 60; LANE, 1981, p. 86-87.

<sup>15</sup> Num 14,11.13.19.23.29.32-34.40; 32,10.13; Deut 1,26.32.34.41; 9,7.22.23-24. See HUGHES, p. 145; BRUCE, 1964, p. 61; LANE, 1981, p. 88-89; KÄSEMANN, Ernst. *The Wandering People of God. An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984, p. 45-48.



and the type of required faithfulness<sup>16</sup>. The community must also recognize and respond to the word of God addressed to them (1,1-2; 2,1-4; 3,7; 4,2.7). Both their present and future are determined by the response they give to the word of God<sup>17</sup>. Rejecting the works of the living God prevented the generation from the desert from entering God's rest, but their failure does not annul the promise of a rest for the people of God (3,7.15; 4,7). Hebrews, therefore, addresses its recipients as a generation about to enter the Promised Land. The "today" of the Psalm<sup>18</sup> concerns them. They may act as the generation from the past, who failed, or respond and keep up in the faith and inherit God's promises (3,13)<sup>19</sup>. The warning seeks to lead them into remaining as faithful participants of Christ, which is in clear contrast with the unbelief of the desert generation. The addressees of Hebrews must "pay greater attention to what they have heard" (2,1; 3,12.13.18), "exhort one to another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" (3,13.15) and "approach to the throne of grace with boldness" so they may enter God's rest. This premise, established from the citation and exposition of the Scripture, is expanded in the presentation of the meaning of rest: "there remains, then, a rest for the people of God" (4,1-13).

### **"So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God" (Heb 4,9)**

Heb 3,7-4,13, an exegesis of Ps 95,7b-11, develops the conditional clause of 3,6 first by comparing the Exodus generation under Moses with

<sup>16</sup> YEO, Khiok-Khng. "The Meaning and Usage of the theology of 'Rest' (κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός) in Hebrews 3,7-4,13". *Asia Journal of Theology* 5/1, 1991, p. 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> YEO, 1991, p. 8; BARRETT, C. K. "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews". In: *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*. C. H. Dodd Festschrift. W. D. Davies/D. Daube (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 365; ELLINGWORTH, 1993, p. 228-230.

<sup>18</sup> Σήμερον ("today"), in the context of Psalm (v.7b), is the today of the faithful, which was created by God in the Exodus. By mentioning the creation and appealing to a second creation, the Exodus, the psalmist makes it possible to update the "today" in any moment of history. In this regard, the Psalm is addressed to all of those who, from generation to generation, worship Yahweh. See ENNS, 1993, p. 268.

<sup>19</sup> KÄSEMANN, 1984, p. 30-31.

the current generation, who is in a pilgrimage led by Christ; and second, by showing the promise of rest is yet to be fulfilled, that it still existed long after the entering into Canaan, to establish its effectiveness for the current people of God<sup>20</sup>. Hebrews employs the words *κατάπαυσις* and *σαββατισμὸς* to name the promised rest<sup>21</sup>. *Κατάπαυσις* occurs for the first time in Hebrews 3,11, in the quoting of Ps 95,11, right after the warning of 3,6: “and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope”. The use of *διό* (“therefore”: 3,7) indicates the function of Ps 95 must be seen in the context of this conditional statement. *Διό* is a transition which signals both what comes before and next. Heb 3,6, in its turn, indicates both security: *οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς* (“we are his house”), and a warning about an impending danger: “if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope”<sup>22</sup>.

The tragic outcome of the death of the desert generation grounds the warning, but it is taken to a new stage in 4,1-13, where it is stressed the current people of God are heirs to the promise of God’s rest. Heb 4,1-13 presents to its readers the possibility of entering the promised rest, but also the danger the people of God are faced with in the day of “today”. In its argumentation, it defines more clearly the meaning of the promised rest and the responsibility of a community set up by their listening to the voice of God in the Scripture. In this way, Hebrews establishes the effectiveness of the promise of rest and the need the current generation has to enter it by juxtaposing the citation of Ps 95,11 and Gen 2,2b (LXX), presenting two lines of thinking. The first line of thinking takes us back to the time before the generation of the desert, to the creation. Hebrews mentions God’s rest in creation (Gen 2,2; Heb 4,3) and identifies it with the rest of Psalm 95,11, which God calls “my rest” (Heb 4,4-5).

<sup>20</sup> BARRETT, 1956, p. 367-368; BRUCE, 1964, p. 74; ATTRIDGE, 1989, p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> Hebrews uses the noun form *κατάπαυσις* (“rest”) eight times (3,11.18; 4,1.3.5.10.11) and the verb form *καταπαύω* three times, two times with an intransitive meaning (“rest”: 4,4.10) and one time with a transitive meaning (“give rest”: 4,8). In 4,9 it introduces the word *σαββατισμὸς*, a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament. See WRAY, Judith Hoch. *Rest as a Theological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Truth. Early Christian Homiletics of Rest*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998, p. 20-25.

<sup>22</sup> THOMPSON, J. W. *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Washington, DC: 1982, p. 92-93.

Hebrews quotes Gen 2:2b, but inserts the expression ὁ θεὸς ἐν between κατέπαυσεν and τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ἑβδόμῃ:

Gen 2,2 LXX	Heb 4,4b
Καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὧν ἐποίησεν.	Καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.
And he rested on the seventh day from all work he had done.	And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

The citation is used to prove the “rest” originated after the creation of the world, that is, the “rest” the Israelites fell short of because of their unbelief and disobedience had already existed since the moment God finished the creation of the world. This identification also grounds the statement of Hebrews 4,3: “his works were finished at the foundation of the world”, proving the phrase “my rest” (Ps 95,11), does not mean the rest in the land of Canaan; it is the rest of God after the creation of the world<sup>23</sup>. The identification of God’s rest with the promise of the psalm indicates it is still possible to experience God’s rest (4,1.6). However, the people of God have never fully rested from their works, as God did. So, if the people of God have never experienced the rest promised to them, the possibility of rest “still remains, so the promise is effective” (4,9.10)<sup>24</sup>.

The second line of thinking distinguishes the promised rest from the rest in Canaan, by stating Joshua led the people of Israel to the Promised Land, but he did not give them permanent rest (4,8). Whatever rest given by Joshua to the Israelites, it obviously does not abrogate the promise, as Ps 95 repeated it to those living in its time: “Again, he sets a certain day – ‘today’ – saying through David much later, in the words already quoted, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts’” (4,7). Thus, from the unfinished nature of the promise, Hebrews infers the “sabbath rest that remains for the people of

<sup>23</sup> SCHRÖGER, 1968, p. 109-110; WILLIAMSON, R. *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 539-540.

<sup>24</sup> H. W. Attridge, “Let us strive to enter that rest’: The Logic of Hebrews 4:1-11”. *HTR* 73, 1980, p. 280-281; LESCHERT, 1991, p. 125.

God” (4,9) must have some characteristic the rest achieved in Joshua’s time lacked<sup>25</sup>.

Hebrews expands the meaning of rest as regards this context. Rest does not mean just the presence of God and entering the land, for the promise of “entering rest” was still valid long after the land was conquered. Ps 95, written long after that, besides restating it and warning about the consequences of disobedience, proves convincingly the Israelites had not achieved rest the moment they entered the Promised Land, because if that had happened at that time, the warning of the Psalm would not be necessary. This way, Hebrews ensures the effectiveness of the promise of rest for the current people of God by identifying God’s rest in creation with the promise of rest of Ps 95 (Heb 4,4-5)<sup>26</sup>.

Hebrews consolidates the association of God’s rest in creation with the effectiveness of the promise of rest to the current people of God with the analogy of 4,3: “For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, `As in my angry I swore, `They shall not enter my rest`, though his works were finished at the foundation of the world”, which links the God’s rest in creation to the rest mentioned in Ps 95. Such change was made possible by associating the word κατάπαυσις (“rest”), with the cognate verb κατάπαυειν (“to rest”): “And God rested (κατέπαυσεν) on the seventh day” (Gen 2,2). The use of those terms allows for inferring, from the analogy of words<sup>27</sup>, that the expression “my rest” is interpreted as the God’s primal rest after the creation of the world (Gen 2,1-3)<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> ATTRIDGE, 1980, p. 282; WILLIAMSON, 1970, p. 550; LESCHERT, 1991, p. 126.

<sup>26</sup> LESCHERT, 1991, p. 127.

<sup>27</sup> Hebrews uses the Jewish hermeneutical principle of *gezerah shawah*. *Gezerah shawah* means literally “equal principle/ determination”, and correspondes to the Hellenistic expression *synkrisis pros ison*. It is, therefore, an analogical argumentation, used in a strict sense when the same expressions are found in passages of the Torah. See STRACK, H. L./STEMBERGER, G. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 21; BATEMAN, Herbert W. *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5-13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997, p. 13-14; ELLIS, E. E. *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*. Canon and Interpretation in Modern Research. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991, p. 96-101.

<sup>28</sup> The word *menuhah* (“rest”), used in Ps 95, is not the same in Gen 2:2-3, which uses *sabbat*. But the parallel passage of Exodus 20,11 uses the same root of Psalm 95,11. This parallelism is important, for God’s rest in creation is what grounds Hebrews’

Thus, Hebrews not only creates the term σαββατισμὸς with the aim to portray the rest as something that has existed since the creation, but also – through the development of 4,1-11 – it expands the interpretation of Psalm 95,7b-11 by presenting the “rest” as something Israel did not achieve in the past<sup>29</sup>.

Although the association of σαββατισμὸς with God’s rest distinguishes it from the use of κατάπαυσις, which refers directly to the rest in the Promised Land (3,11.18), Hebrews also uses κατάπαυσις as a synonym of σαββατισμὸς. Hebrews 4,4 makes the connection between κατάπαυσις from Psalm 95,11 to κατέπαυσεν from Genesis 2b to show the rest is part of the creation of God. The use of σαββατισμὸς in v. 9 repeats the essential idea of v.6a; and v.10 substitutes σαββατισμὸς with the equivalent expression: “his rest”, that is, God’s rest. The use of κατάπαυσις as a synonym of σαββατισμὸς depends on the context. “That rest” (4,11), available to the addressees of Hebrews, is both God’s rest and the Sabbath rest: σαββατισμὸς (v. 9-10). In v. 10, κατάπαυσις is a synonym of σαββατισμὸς, but in v. 8 the verb form of the same root is different. Heb 4,10 helps define the nature of the “rest” by portraying it according to the model of God’s rest in creation<sup>30</sup>.

The rest Hebrews emphasizes is “God’s rest”. The first mention to the expression “God’s rest” occurs in the citation of Ps 95 in 3,11. Heb 3,18 e 4:4 mentions God’s rest again: the quotation of Genesis 2,2 in 4:4 also aims to prove “God’s rested on the seventh day from all his works”. It is God himself who establishes a certain day for the rest (4,6-7), and the rest, which remains as a possibility for the people of God, is analogous to God’s rest after He had finished his work of creation (4,4.10b). The Israelites from the past missed an opportunity of entering God’s rest because of their unbelief and disobedience (3,12.19; 4,2), but those who believe enter rest. Thus, the warning to persevere in Hebrews 3,7-19, so that the current people of God “hold firm to the end”, is an invitation to

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identification of the rest of Ps 95 with the Sabbath rest (4,4.9). Following the Septuagint, Hebrews uses the same root in its quotations, but the association it presents between the rest promised to its generation and God’s rest in creation indicates the promised rest is different from the rest of Canaan.

<sup>29</sup> ATTRIDGE, 1989, p. 128-130; LANE, 1981, p. 95; ELLINGWORTH, 1993, p. 255.

<sup>30</sup> ATTRIDGE, 1980, p. 282-283.

pilgrimage towards God's rest: "For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end" (3,14)<sup>31</sup>.

The rest is both present and future. The addressees of Hebrews heard the word of the promise in Jesus Christ "in these last days" (1,1-2), that is, in their "today" (3,7.13.15; 4,7). In other words, "today" marks off the period of "today" and "not yet" from the ultimate time. Therefore, "today" God's rest is both a reality and a promise. The verb "enter" (4,3) shows the rest is something that can be achieved now, becoming a guarantee of the reality yet to come<sup>32</sup>. The rest is the first image used to describe the goal the people of God has to achieve, and which is described in other places as "the city that has foundations" (11,10), "the city God has prepared" (11,16), "the city of the living God" (12,22) and "the city that is to come" (13,14). For that reason, Hebrews finishes this section in 4,12-13, right after the final warning: "Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs" (4:11), with an statement on the power of the word of God, presented as an active judging force, from which no one can hide (4,12-13). The statement on the power of the word of God, which is formally in line with the quotation of Ps 95, offers a reflection on the power of the word of God addressed to his people through the Psalm, while the greatest motive of 3,7-4,13 builds up to a climax. The word of God, whose sanctions were imposed effectively upon the exodus generation, is active, and "today", it confronts the community with the same alternatives of rest and wrath. The mention to the madness and unfaithfulness of Israel in the desert indicates the expression "God's word" refers specifically to the text of the Scripture, quoted extensively in 3,7-4:11. The concept of God's word presented is an adequate corollary to the introduction of the quotation of Psalm 95,7b-11 as "the words of the Holy Spirit" (93,7a)<sup>33</sup>. Being exposed to the word of the Scripture requires being exposed before God Himself. God's word, "living and active", reaches and scrutinizes

<sup>31</sup> WILLIAMSON, 1970, p. 552-553.

<sup>32</sup> BARRETT, 1956, 372; WILLIAMSON, 1970, p. 554-556; SCHOLER, J. M. *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, p. 195-200.

<sup>33</sup> LANE, 1981, p. 102-103; ATTRIDGE, 1989, p. 134-136.

the deepest of human hearts. It exposes thoughts and intentions of the heart and nothing resists its power of unmasking<sup>34</sup>.

Summing up, the use of Ps 95,7b-11 and Gen 2,2b in Heb 3,7-4,13 is aimed mainly to provide a rationale for a warning, whose underlying theme, the “rest”, is presented with the generation of the desert as a background, that is, “those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses”, but “sinned”, and “whose bodies fell in the wilderness. The use of Ps 95, whose theme is creation and recreation, connects the Exodus and the return from Babylon to the images of shepherding and the incident of Meribah and Massah as a paradigm for a warning. Heb 3,1-4,13, by juxtaposing the quotation of Psalm 95,11 and Genesis 2,2b, stresses the Christian community as heirs to the promise of God’s rest, that is, the effectiveness of the promise of rest and the need the current people of God has to enter it. In this regard, the interpretation of the Scriptures in Heb 3,7-4,13 shows the current people of God are in a situation that is analogous to that of the Exodus generation. Both are exodus communities in their periods of pilgrimage through the desert, and the comparison between two different generations of the people of God – the Israelites of the Exodus and the Christian community – points up their common way of living, and also indicates the pilgrim nature of the current people of God who must move forward and reach the divine goal.

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<sup>34</sup> WILLIAMSON, 1970, p. 390; ELLINGWORTH, 1993, p. 264-265.



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