

Exodus in Hebrews

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## I. Introduction

The Epistle to the Hebrews arguably quotes explicitly from a Greek version of Exodus only two times. Hebrews 8:5 reproduces Exod 25:40 LXX with minor variations, while Heb 9:20 more loosely cites Exod 24:8b LXX.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, however, Hebrews contains numerous echoes and allusions to stories, passages and motifs found in Exodus. To note only a few examples, Heb 11:22 refers to the exodus; Heb 11:23–28 summarizes and interprets Exod 2:1–15 and Exod 12; Heb 11:29 recalls Exod 14:21–31; and, Heb 12:18–19 draws on Exod 19:12–13. The presence of this Pentateuchal book at these and other points in Hebrews is well known, and the author's extended reflection on the generation of Israelites who left Egypt and were led into the wilderness naturally calls up the exodus. Not many, however, have focused sustained attention on the various roles the book of Exodus plays in the author's theological reasoning.<sup>2</sup> By way of contrast, Deuteronomy has received a great deal more attention in recent times.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss these quotations in more detail in Section II below.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, commentators engage with the exodus tradition in Hebrews, largely in terms of the wilderness wandering assumed to be so important for Hebrews. The short study of Richard C. Oudersluys highlights the contrasts set up by the eschatological wilderness wandering and the author's call not to turn back as key ways that Hebrews uses the exodus narrative to subvert the cult of the Mosaic covenant ("Exodus in the Letter to the Hebrews," in *Grace Upon Grace: Essays in Honor of Lester J. Kuyper* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 143–52). More recently, Bong Chur Shin offers a biblical theology of certain new exodus themes in Hebrews (*New Exodus in Hebrews*, Apostolos New Testament Studies [London: Apostolos, 2016]). In my view the work is hobbled somewhat by the argument that Hebrews conflates Passover and Yom Kippur, though several important themes linked with the exodus narrative are noted.

<sup>3</sup> The importance of Deuteronomy in Hebrews has been convincingly demonstrated by David M. Allen (see esp. David M. Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation: A Study in Narrative Re-Presentation*, WUNT 2/238 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008]; see also, idem., "More Than Just Numbers: Deuteronomical Influence in Hebrews 3:7–4:11," *TynBul* 58 [2007]: 129–49. More recently see Michael Harrison Kibbe, *Godly Fear or Ungodly Failure?: Hebrews 12 and the Sinai Theophanies*, BZNW 216 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016). Kibbe dedicates a section of his volume to

This brief study cannot fully address all the ways that Exodus is in play in Hebrews. I attempt, though, to highlight some of the most important ways that the author of Hebrews draws upon the book of Exodus and the larger exodus tradition in his brief “word of exhortation” (Heb 13:22). I look first at the two clear citations of Exodus noted above, turning second to explore ways that Exodus and the exodus narrative inform larger themes in Hebrews. Rather than offer a granular account of all the possible echoes of and allusions to Exodus (though several of these will necessarily be mentioned), I unpack three specific ways that Exodus functions in the theological reasoning of this text.

First, Exodus provides narrative elements that help to structure the main contours of the author’s argument, particularly in the first four chapters of Hebrews. The author’s exodus-generation metaphor, which serves to shape the identity of the intended audience as those who have been freed from bondage and are now in the wilderness waiting to receive their inheritance, draws heavily from the narrative of the exodus.<sup>4</sup> Second, Exodus provides material that influences the author’s belief in the existence of significant heavenly realities, especially the heavenly tabernacle. As such, certain passages of the book serve as biblical evidence for the author’s cosmological commitments. Exodus thereby offers the author biblical material that informs, albeit dialogically, his reflection on Jesus’ death, inauguration of the new covenant, and

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the role of Exodus, though he does not see it playing as significant or positive a role as here argued (see *ibid.*, 112–20). Gert J. Steyn’s essay, “Deuteronomy in Hebrews” (in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, LNTS 358 [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 152–68) discusses the citations of Deuteronomy in Hebrews, but also helpfully lays out some of the major motifs in Hebrews that have especially interesting points of contact with Deuteronomy.

<sup>4</sup> I have explored aspects of this idea in a handful of other publications. See especially David M. Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative: Distinguishing between Jesus’ Inauguration and Maintenance of the New Covenant in Hebrews,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* (ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce and Francis Watson; LNTS 565; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 153–71; and, *idem*, “Perseverance, Purity, and Identity: Exploring Hebrews’ Eschatological Worldview, Ethics, and In-Group Bias,” in *Sensitivity to Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. Jacobus Kok, et al., WUNT 2/364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 357–81.

ascension through the heavens into the heavenly tabernacle where he serves as high priest. Third, Exodus not only functions as a source from which the author draws, but also as a source that he feels some freedom to adapt for moral and theological illustration. This is evident at various points throughout Hebrews, but is especially clear in 11:23–29 and 12:18–24.

One caveat should be noted at the outset of this study. I do not intend to imply that an identification of a possible allusion to the exodus event or of the use of language and themes that recall or come from the book of Exodus necessarily exclude allusions to or the influence of other biblical texts on the author. The author does not always bind himself to one source, even with respect to his depiction of the exodus and subsequent wilderness journey of those liberated from slavery. He can and does at points draw from and conflate different biblical accounts of these events.<sup>5</sup> He simply assumes the reality of the exodus and wilderness journey and conflates depictions of these events from throughout the Pentateuch, among other texts, when reflecting on them. Thus, the author does not always approach biblical texts atomistically, but can draw freely from them in a way that suggests an assumption of coherence and harmony among differing accounts.<sup>6</sup> God, as he says at the very beginning of discourse and repeatedly illustrates throughout it, speaks in scripture. He takes these words as authoritative and revelatory. Moreover, not only do his interpretive moves at times betray his knowledge of extra biblical traditions (e.g., he appears to know the tradition of angels giving the law in Heb 2:2), his exegesis of these texts can also take him well beyond the explicit details of any of the biblical passages that serve as his primary sources (e.g., Heb 11:19, 27). The author's biblical and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, his depiction of Moses and the people at the foot of Mount Sinai in Heb 12:18–21 is a pastiche that freely draws from elements of the Sinai account in Exod 19 (see the command to stone even animals who touch the mountain in Exod 19:13 LXX) and the two Horeb accounts in Deut 4 and 9 (see especially Moses' expression of fear in Deut 9:19 LXX).

<sup>6</sup> Susan E. Docherty has ably demonstrated the wide variety of ways that the author, in keeping with the sophistication of late-second temple Jewish exegesis, can engage with scripture (*The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, WUNT 2/260 [(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009)]).

theological insights are complex and profound. I take this complexity as a given. I nevertheless seek here to unpick the peculiar influence of Exodus on the homily even though this narrow focus requires at times a certain reduction and simplification of the author’s labyrinthine engagement with scripture.<sup>7</sup>

## II. Hebrews’ Explicit Quotations of Exodus

### a. Hebrews 8:5b and Exodus 25:40 LXX

Assuming LXX Exodus is best represented by the critical text of the Göttingen *Septuaginta* volume,<sup>8</sup> the differences between Heb 8:5 and Exod 25:40 LXX are minor. The differences are illustrated below by italicizing the variants in Hebrews relative to LXX.

Hebrews 8:5b

Exodus 25:40 LXX

ὄρα ... ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον

ὄρα ποιήσεις κατὰ τὸν τύπον

τὸν *δειχθέντα* σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει<sup>9</sup>

τὸν δεδειγμένον σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει

As this side-by-side comparison shows, the differences consist in the textual plus in Hebrews of the direct object πάντα after ποιήσεις and the occurrence in Hebrews of the aorist passive

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<sup>7</sup> The rich web of inner-biblical connections in Hebrews is one way in which the epistle is very much at home in late-second temple Jewish interpretation. The point is well illustrated by David Flusser who, in his brief study of Heb 3–4 and Ps 95 in the light of Jewish interpretive traditions, uncovers some of the “mycelium” or “network of exegetical tissues” present in both rabbinic reflection on Ps 95 and Heb 3–4 (“‘Today if You will Listen to His Voice’: Creative Jewish Exegesis in Hebrews 3–4,” in *Creative Biblical Exegesis: Christian and Jewish Hermeneutics Through the Centuries*, ed. Benjamin Uffenheimer and Henning Graf Reventlow, JSOTSS 59 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988], 55–62, here 59).

<sup>8</sup> Steyn has recently demonstrated afresh the validity of this conclusion (*Quest*, 241).

<sup>9</sup> The phrase γάρ φησιν in Heb 8:5 is the author’s postpositive introduction to the citation and has therefore been replaced here with ellipses.

participle of δείκνυμι (δειχθέντα) instead of the perfect passive form of the verb (δεδειγμένον) attested in LXX.

The textual plus of πάντα in Hebrews probably represents the author's local manuscript/*Vorlage*. Evidence for this supposition comes from Philo (*Leg.* 3.102), who independently attests πάντα as the object of ποιήσεις in a citation of Exod 25:40.<sup>10</sup> This suggests that manuscripts containing πάντα (or at least common interpretive traditions that took the word as a given) were in circulation.

Apart from Hebrews itself, support for δειχθέντα in the LXX-manuscript tradition is late.<sup>11</sup> These manuscripts likely reflect the influence of Hebrews on the transmission of LXX Exodus.<sup>12</sup> This does not by itself prove that that author's local manuscript read something other than δειχθέντα, but given the evidence available, it seems most likely that his *Vorlage* contained the perfect participle, which he then changed to the aorist.<sup>13</sup>

If this is correct, then one can reasonably inquire into the potential rationale for the alteration. The affect of the aorist is felt mainly in the contrast (δέ) that follows in Heb 8:6 where the author uses a perfect tense verb (τετύχεν) with reference to Jesus' perpetual heavenly ministry. The interplay of δείκνυμι and τυγκάνω in this part of his discourse, in terms of the semantics of both the lexemes and their tense forms, correlates well with the presumed superiority of the current ministry of Jesus. Jesus has *now obtained* (νυνὶ δὲ ... τετύχεν) a better

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<sup>10</sup> See especially the detailed discussion in Gert J. Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* (FRLANT 235; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), esp. 242–45. It should be noted that Philo's citation of the verse differs from that of Hebrews. On the point under discussion, Philo transposes the order of the verb and its direct object relative to Hebrews. His citation of the phrase in question reads: πάντα ποιήσεις. He also locates the phrase at the end of Exod 25:40, not, as in LXX and Hebrews, at the beginning of the verse.

<sup>11</sup> O<sup>767</sup>-15 *fs* 126-128 426 799. Though the verb is misspelled, mss. 130 and 376 also appear to support the aorist form.

<sup>12</sup> So John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, SCS 30 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 410.

<sup>13</sup> Many interpreters draw this conclusion (see, e.g., Steyn, *Quest*, 243, 245).

ministry than that of Moses, that is, he is now in the state of having a ministry that is superior to that of Moses not least because Moses was only shown (δειχθέντα) the heavenly tabernacle when he sojourned on the mountain, while Jesus has now entered that reality and obtained the ministry that gives him perpetual access to the Father (see esp. 8:1–4). Thus, the shift between the aorist tense form with reference to Moses to the perfect tense form with reference to Jesus aligns well with the author’s larger argument that the τύπος shown to Moses belongs to the superior ministry that Jesus is now in the state of having obtained and is presently performing, partly by virtue of his entry into and perpetual intercession in the very structure that Moses only saw (see 4:14–16; 7:25; 8:1–2; 9:1–11).

b. Hebrews 9:20 and Exodus 24:8b LXX

The relationship between Heb 9:20 and Exod 24:8b LXX proves less clear than that of Heb 8:5b and Exod 25:40 LXX. The relevant sections of the two texts are again compared below with italics highlighting the points where Hebrews diverges from LXX.

Hebrews 9:20

*τοῦτο* τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς  
*ἐνετείλατο* πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός

Exodus 24:8b LXX

Ἴδου τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς  
διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς

This comparison shows the degree of difference between LXX and Hebrews, which is greater than was evident in Heb 8:5. To summarize: Hebrews 1) reads *τοῦτο* where LXX reads *ιδού*, 2) uses a different finite verb in the relative clause (*ἐντέλλομαι* rather than *διατίθημι*), and 3) both transposes the location of the subject of the relative clause in relation to the prepositional phrase

and uses a different lexeme with reference to God (ὁ θεός rather than the anarthrous κύριος in LXX).<sup>14</sup>

Commentators puzzle over these differences and offer a variety of solutions. Many think that the author intentionally changes ἰδοῦ to τοῦτο Exod 24:8b in order to allude to Jesus' words at the institution of the eucharist.<sup>15</sup> Some argue that Hebrews alters διέθετο to ἐνετείλατο due to a desire to stress that the Mosaic covenant was one of commands or laws in contrast with the new covenant.<sup>16</sup> Harold Attridge suggests that the author may have changed the verb to reserve διατίθημι for the new covenant.<sup>17</sup> The use of θεός instead of κύριος is assumed by many to be an intentional change in order to distinguish the Father, often identified in Hebrews as θεός, from Jesus, several times called κύριος.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that Hebrews works freely with the larger narrative of Exod 24 in this section of his homily.<sup>19</sup> This does not, however, necessarily imply that the author has only loosely cited Exod 24:8b, changing elements to fit his theological presuppositions. Steyn nevertheless favors the view that the relatively high number of changes in Heb 9:20 relative to LXX points to this being a paraphrase of the verse from the author's memory rather than a proper citation.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Steyn argues that the number of variations between Heb 9:20 and Exod 24:8 LXX suggest that Hebrews does not technically qualify as a citation of the verse but rather counts more loosely as a reference to it (*Quest*, 178–82).

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth J. Thomas argues that τοῦτο “appears to be a deliberate change to echo the words of Jesus at the Last Supper” (“The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews,” *NTS* 11 [1965]: 303–25, here 313). See also, Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 469, who points to several older commentators that take the same view. Among more recent commentaries see, Knut Backhaus, *Der Hebräerbrief*, RNT (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2009), 231–32; John W. Kleinig, *Hebrews*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017), 443; Jean Massonet, *L'épître aux Hébreux*, Commentaire Biblique: Nouveau Testament 15 (Paris: Cerf, 2016), 248. So also Steyn, *Quest*, 274–75.

<sup>16</sup> So, for example, Thomas, “Old Testament Citations,” 313–14; Massonet, *Hébreux*, 248.

<sup>17</sup> Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 257.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 470; Kleinig, *Hebrews*, 443; Massonet, *Hébreux*, 248; Steyn, *Quest*, 278.

<sup>19</sup> For a helpful and compact discussion of the main differences between Hebrews and Exod 24, see esp. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2006), 241–42.

<sup>20</sup> Steyn, *Quest*, 278–79.

Yet, the author introduces Exod 24:8b with the participle λέγων. It may be significant that he uses this participle elsewhere to put citations of scripture into the mouths of various speakers (see 2:6, 12; 12:26; cf. 4:7).<sup>21</sup> A few pieces of evidence may also indicate that alternate versions of this verse were circulating. There is some evidence from Philo to suggest that he knew a version of Exod 24:8b that contained ἐντελλόμεαι instead of διατίθημι (see *QE* 2.36, though the original Greek is lacking). Septuagint manuscripts in the *x* group<sup>22</sup> agree with Hebrews in attesting both ἐνετείλατο and πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός, but these are late minuscules and these readings are likely due to the influence of Hebrews. More interesting is the Aramaic version of Exod 24:8b in Tg. Onq., which has Moses say, “Behold, this (יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ) is the blood ...”.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the source of this reading, it conflates the reading in LXX/MT and the reading attested here in Hebrews. Curiously, the same conflation occurs in most of the later *f* group of Septuagint manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> The reading of Onqelos may be a coincidence, but one wonders if the targum points to a Hebrew text form that did contain a demonstrative pronoun. At the very least, the targum appears to show that some interpretive traditions felt the need to place some emphasis on the blood, as the reading in Hebrews also does. As for θεός, the use of the word to render the Tetragrammaton is well attested. Hebrews, moreover, is hardly consistent in identifying the Father as θεός and Jesus as κύριος (see, e.g., 1:8 where the Son is referred to as θεός by way of a scriptural citation, and 7:21; 8:8–11; 10:16, 30; 12:5–6 for instances where κύριος refers to the Father). The argument that the author has altered his *Vorlage* to read θεός to avoid confusion is, therefore, tenuous.

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<sup>21</sup> Steyn also notes this fact (*Quest*, 279).

<sup>22</sup> The *x* group consists of minuscules 71, 527 (ab 288) and 619.

<sup>23</sup> See the text in Alexander Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic: Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts*, Volumes I–III (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 130.

<sup>24</sup> The *f* group consists of minuscules 53, 56, 129, 246, and 664. In this case, the original reading of 56 does not support the variant.



While the preceding evidence is meager and does not definitively prove the existence of an alternate version of Exod 24:8b, the assessment of George Howard on Hebrews' version of this verse is worth noting. Howard comments, "There is a possible Hebrew influence here since [Hebrews] quotes Ex. xxiv 8 fairly accurately but in words different from the LXX."<sup>25</sup> There is something to this observation. In my view, while it is not impossible that the author offers here his own translation from a Hebrew text as Howard's comment implies, the supposition that the author has a Greek *Vorlage*/local manuscript that contains a translation of a Hebrew text which differs here from LXX seems highly plausible. Howard is in any case right that the rendering in Hebrews does not look like an unreasonable translation of something like Exod 24:8b MT, though it clearly differs from LXX. If it is the case that Hebrews knows a version other than LXX, then arguments about why Hebrews has changed LXX are far less persuasive.

### III. Aspects of Exodus' Narrative in Hebrews 1–4

Already in the opening chapter of Hebrews the author's discussion of the *Son* (υἱός) invokes concepts and language evocative of the larger exodus narrative found in Exodus. Attentive and biblically literate auditors can already detect echoes of the exodus story in Heb 1:6, which describes God *leading* (εἰσαγεῖν) his *firstborn son* (πρωτότοκος) into *the inhabitable world* (εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην). This descriptive language, which depicts Jesus' entrance into the eschatological inheritance promised to God's people (see Heb 2:5),<sup>26</sup> uses terms and phrasing that recall God's act of delivering Israel from Egypt. Thus, Exod 4:22 LXX describes Israel as God's *firstborn son* (υἱὸς πρωτότοκός μου Ἰσραήλ). God performs this deliverance in order to *lead* (εἰσαγεῖν, Exod

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<sup>25</sup> George Howard, "Hebrews and the Old Testament Quotations," *NovT* 10 (1968): 208–16, here 215.

<sup>26</sup> For my detailed argumentation defending this interpretation and critiquing others see David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NovTSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 53–118.

3:8; 13:5, 11; 15:17; 23:20) Israel into the promised land of their inheritance, which Exod 16:35 LXX describes as *an inhabitable land* (εἰς γῆν οἴκουμένην).<sup>27</sup>

Those who hear echoes of Exodus in Heb 1 are likely to prick up their ears even more when in Heb 2:2 the author appears to allude to a Jewish interpretative tradition of the Sinai events that identifies angels as the ones who gave the law to Moses.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, when the author speaks in Heb 2:4 of God performing “signs (σημεῖα) and wonders (τέρατα) and various powers, and distributions of the Holy Spirit,” astute listeners may well recall the fact that the collocation of the plural terms *signs* (σημεῖα) and *wonders* (τέρατα) first occurs in the Pentateuch in Exod 7:3 LXX. The terms refer here specifically to the mighty works God did in the course of liberating his people from their enslavement in Egypt. The plausibility that the author of Hebrews intends to recall the exodus at Heb 2:4 only increases in light of the fact that the collocation of the terms *signs* and *wonders* throughout Exodus generally refers to these miraculous acts (see Exod 7:9; 11:9–10). In fact, while the collocation does not always in Septuagintal parlance recall the events of the exodus (e.g., Deut 28:46; Ps 64:9; Wis 8:8; Isa 8:18; 20:3), God’s mighty works during the exodus are by far the most common referent of the collocation of *signs* and *wonders* in Septuagint Greek (see Deut 4:3; 6:22; 11:3; 26:8; 29:2; 34:11; Pss 77:43; 104:27; 134:9; Wis 10:16; Jer 39:20–21; Bar 2:11; see also the similar phrase in extra biblical texts such as *Jub* 48:4, 12 and *LAB* 9:7; as well as the collocation in Acts 7:36).<sup>29</sup>

The strongest evidence, however, that the author intends to refer to the exodus comes when he explicitly encourages his readers to imagine their current situation in terms of the

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<sup>27</sup> See Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 150.

<sup>28</sup> This tradition is evident in *Jubilees* where the angel of the presense speaks with Moses on the mountain, as well as in Acts 7:38 and Gal 3:19.

<sup>29</sup> See also Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 142; and Kibbe, *Godly Fear*, 124.

exodus generation's liberation from enslavement and initial wilderness journey towards their promised inheritance. The comparison in Heb 3–4 of his readers with the very generation of Israelites who were liberated from slavery in Egypt and led to the edge of the inheritance promised to them by God makes good sense when seen within the matrix of echoes of Exodus and the exodus events embedded in Heb 1–2. In fact, the larger narrative arc of the exodus tradition provides much of the underlying plotline the author uses to shape and inform the imagination of his readers, whom he exhorts not to waver in their confession about Jesus.

The major contours of this narrative arc begin to emerge in Heb 2:14–18 where the writer speaks about Jesus' death as an act that liberates Abraham's seed from the enslaving power of the fear of death and that defeats the Devil, the one who wields this power.<sup>30</sup> The imagery of the Devil holding God's people in bondage and being defeated by Jesus, whose death delivers them from their enslavement, alludes to Exodus. This language particularly recalls the story of Moses performing the first Passover.<sup>31</sup> Within the larger context of Hebrews the logic of these verses appears to presuppose an implicit comparison between Jesus' death and Moses' act of applying the blood of the Passover lambs to the doors and lintels of the Israelite houses.

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<sup>30</sup> As I hinted above, the narrative of God leading his firstborn Son into the coming world seems itself to follow a new exodus pattern. Jesus' faithfulness in his life and death, which issues in his resurrection and entrance into the promised inheritance, functions in part as a moral and eschatological paradigm in the homily. For an exploration of these dynamics in Hebrews see Matthew C. Easter, *The Faith and Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 160 (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> A few commentators recognize this. For example, Johnson suspects a connection between the slaughter of the Passover lamb and the exodus with Jesus' death and the liberation of his people (*Hebrews*, 303). Philip Edgcumbe Hughes briefly notes the possibility of a link between Heb 11:28 and 2:14–16 (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 500-1). John Dunnill has a more robust account of Passover in Hebrews, arguing that it is substantial motif throughout the epistle's argument (*Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS 75 (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1993), esp. 127–28, 154–55, and 159 [cf. 107]). Many, however, think Passover is not significant for Hebrews. For example, Attridge states, "Hebrews does not make explicit any symbolic or typological significance of [the Passover]," (*Hebrews*, 343). See also, Pamela M. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context*, SBLDS 156 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 171; and Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 504.

This is not to say that the allusion is direct. Rather, the resonances are heard most clearly when amplified by other Jewish interpretive traditions about Exodus that predate Hebrews. The rewriting of Exodus known as *Jubilees* offers some particularly illuminating parallels, especially around its interpretation of Exod 12:23, which speaks of the Destroyer striking the firstborn during the night of the first Passover. In Heb 11:28 the author refers clearly to the first Passover by way of an allusion to Exod 12:23.

Exodus presents Moses' direction about and performance of the Passover as essential to protecting the Israelite firstborn from *the Destroyer* (ὁ ὀλεθρεύων, Exod 12:23 LXX) and to liberating the nation from their bondage to Pharaoh. In Heb 11:28, the author alludes to Exod 12:23 when he explicitly affirms that Moses' use of the Passover blood protected God's people from *the Destroyer* (ὁ ὀλοθρεύων). The evidence of *Jubilees* demonstrates that some second temple Jews understood Exod 12:23 to mean that a malevolent angel, known in *Jubilees* as Prince Mastemah, was involved in striking down the firstborn during that first Passover (see esp. *Jub* 48:4–49:6).<sup>32</sup> Given that Mastemah is identified throughout *Jubilees* with the Satan figure/destroyer who accuses God's people (see *Jub* 17:16–17; 23:29; cf. Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6), it follows that some Jews understood Exod 12:23 in terms of Moses liberating the Israelites not just from Pharaoh, but also from the satanic power controlling him and keeping the people in slavery.

In light of 1) the existence of this sort of interpretation of the one-off reference to the Destroyer in Exodus, and 2) Hebrews' obvious knowledge and acceptance of the claim in Exod 12:23 that the Passover blood prevented the Destroyer from striking the Israelites (see Heb 11:28), it makes good sense to understand Hebrews' claim that Jesus' death defeated the Devil and liberated God's people from the fear of death in terms of Passover and the exodus. This is

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<sup>32</sup> Specifically, Prince Mastemah's minions do the smiting according to *Jubilees*.

not to claim that the author of Hebrews knows *Jubilees*. Whether or not he had read *Jubilees*, the kind of interpretation of Exod 12:23 that *Jubilees* attests sheds helpful light on the underlying logic of aspects of Hebrews, particularly in view of the theme of liberation from spiritual bondage actually present in Heb 2:15.<sup>33</sup> To put the point differently, given the author's comment about the Destroyer in Heb 11:28, it is hardly a stretch to conclude that Jesus' defeat of the Devil and liberation of Abraham's descendants from the fear of death itself in Heb 2:14–16 intends to recall the account in Exodus of Moses' role in protecting Abraham's descendants from the Destroyer and liberating them from their bondage at the first Passover.<sup>34</sup> If this is correct, then the narrative sweep of the Son's incarnation is being presented in terms that recall Moses, Passover, the exodus, and the ultimate consummation of the God's promises to give his people an enduring inheritance.

The actual progression of the homily lends further plausibility to this interpretation for, shortly after linking Jesus' death with the event that liberates Abraham's seed from enslavement, the author turns in Heb 3:1–6 to compare Jesus and Moses. Even more tellingly, he engages in Heb 3:7–4:13 in an extended comparison of his present readers with the very generation of Israelites whom Moses protected from the Destroyer, liberated from Egypt and led into the wilderness.<sup>35</sup> The possible allusions to Exodus detailed above in Hebrews' language about the

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<sup>33</sup> This curious reference in Exodus to a destroyer in Exod 12:23 seems to have sparked substantial exegetical reflection. The influence of this interpretive tradition continues to reverberate even among modern Christians who assume that it was the angel of death who passed over the Israelites.

<sup>34</sup> I argue the point in detail in David M. Moffitt, "Modelled on Moses: Jesus' Death, Passover, and the Defeat of the Devil in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Mosebilder: Gedanken zur Rezeption einer literarischen Figur im Frühjudentum, frühen Christentum und der römisch-hellenistischen Literatur*, ed. M. Sommer, et al, WUNT 1/390 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 279–97.

<sup>35</sup> One might object that the mere mention of Moses is sufficient to trigger the author's turn to the generation who was led into the wilderness. The presence of the motif of liberation from an enslaving power already highlighted in Heb 2, however, suggests that the author's turn to Moses in 3:1–6 already follows naturally from ideas with which he works in Heb 2. The author's movement from Jesus as the one who defeated the Devil and liberated God's people, to a consideration of Moses, and then to a discussion of the very generation of Israelites whom Moses liberated from Egypt is, in other words, not likely to be coincidental. This progression roughly follows that of the exodus and the first Passover, key aspects from the narrative of Exodus. The extended analogy that the author draws

Son entering his promised inheritance in Heb 1, the author's reference in Heb 2:2 to angels giving the law at Sinai, his likely echo in Heb 2:4 of the "signs and wonders" performed by God before and throughout the exodus, his discussion of Jesus' death in Heb 2:14–16 as the event that defeated the Devil and released Abraham's seed from bondage, and his subsequent comparison of Moses and Jesus (Heb 3:1–6) all suggest that Exodus plays a foundational role in giving narrative form and shape to the author's theological reflection on what Jesus has done for God's people by providing the plotline for that reflection. Hebrews' comparison in 3:7–4:11 between the generation in the wilderness and those whom he addresses in the present fits this plotline remarkably well. If 1) the author intends in Heb 2:14ff. to illuminate something of the salvific role of Jesus' death by viewing it through the lens of the first Passover and Moses' work of liberating God's people from the Destroyer, as well as from their slavery in Egypt; and, 2) he intends further to locate his readers within the broader narrative of Exodus, then the comparison he draws in Heb 3:7–4:11 between the current audience and the very Israelites whom Moses led out of Egypt follows naturally from his preceding discussion.

In sum, the homilist's correlation of the present time and people with the time and people depicted in Exodus imaginatively positions his audience in a place similar to those who were liberated from Egypt according to the unfolding plotline of Exodus—recently liberated from slavery and now in the wilderness, looking forward to their promised inheritance. The author's comparison between the newly freed Israelites in the wilderness and the audience is a natural next step in the analogy when one recognizes that he works with the general progression of the narrative in Exodus. Thus, the homilist draws upon Exodus throughout Heb 2–4 not only to

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3:7–4:11 between the audience's current situation and that of Israel just after the exodus—having journeyed in the wilderness to the edge of the inheritance God has promised them—makes good sense on the hypothesis that the author works with an underlying exodus analogy.

inform his reflection on what Jesus has done, but also to help his listeners to imagine their present situation in terms analogous to those of the people led by Moses out of their bondage, into the wilderness and, more importantly, about to receive the inheritance God has promised them. All of this, it should be noted, coheres well with the discussion in Heb 1 of the firstborn Son's entrance into the promised inheritance. Indeed, the Son in Hebrews is not only the effective agent of this new exodus—a new and greater Moses who performs a new and greater Passover/exodus, he is also the first of God's many sons to have successfully gone through the experience of death and liberation from the one who holds death's power. His narrative—his life, death, resurrection and ascension—itsself traces the arc of the exodus analogy and provides thereby the illustration of God's liberation and the ultimate salvation intended for those who hold fast to their confession about Jesus. This is not, however, the extent of our author's use of Exodus.

#### IV. Exodus, the New Covenant, and Jesus' Service in the Heavenly Tabernacle

Although the homilist's defense of the legitimacy of Jesus' high-priestly office in Heb 5–7 does not explicitly draw on Exodus or the larger exodus narrative in the ways or to the extent that his progression of points in Heb 1–4 does, he has hardly left Exodus behind as he continues to reflect on Christ's person, work and people in the rest of his sermon. In Heb 8 his citation of Jer 38:31–35 LXX brings the events surrounding the exodus back into consideration. The new covenant promised in Jeremiah is explicitly compared and contrasted with the covenant God made with Israel and Judah when he brought them out of Egypt (Heb 8:9; Jer 38:32 LXX). Fully in keeping with the exodus-shaped narrative explored above, the author here appeals to Jeremiah to show that the new covenant God has made with his people through Jesus is patterned on the

very one he made with them through Moses when he brought them out of Egypt. Even as the new covenant differs markedly from that earlier covenant the first covenant (Heb 8:9; Jer 38:32 LXX), the two are inextricably linked by the author's analogical reflection on the new covenant in the light of the old.<sup>36</sup> That is to say, the existence, logic and to some degree significance of the new are firmly rooted in those of the old, even organically connected with them. As, then, God freed his people from slavery, brought them out Egypt and made a covenant with them through Moses, so now, in these last days, he has freed them from slavery to the Devil, brought them out of their bondage to the fear of death and made a new covenant—indeed, *the promised* new covenant—with them through Jesus.

The author's discussion of the tabernacle's structure and accoutrement in Heb 9:1–5 further accords with this pattern, as do his references in 9:19–20 to the events of the inauguration of the Mosaic covenant and the tabernacle. In fact, as explored above, the author's most explicit references to Exodus occur in the larger context of his discussion of the new covenant and the heavenly tabernacle. His use of the narrative of Exodus, particularly his interest in Exodus' account of the people's time in the wilderness after their liberation continues to help him explain Jesus' person and work. Jesus, like Moses before him, is now the one who mediates the new, determinative covenant. As the one appointed high priest within this new and better covenant, the author naturally continues to draw from Exodus to inform his understanding of how and where Jesus ministers on behalf of his people. To put the point differently, the citation of Exod 25:40 in Heb 8:5, coupled with the confession that Jesus has "passed through the heavens" (Heb 4:14) and entered the heavenly tabernacle where he now ministers for his people (Heb 8:1–4; see also 7:25), enables the author to look to the tabernacle's structure, which is detailed in Exodus,

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<sup>36</sup> So also Kibbe, *Godly Fear*, 118–20.



as informative for the layout and structure of the place that Jesus has entered when he passed through the heavens.<sup>37</sup> Exodus not only grounds his exodus-generation metaphor, certain details in the book also underwrite in significant ways his analogical reasoning about Jesus' person and work. Hebrews, moreover, appears to read this part of Exodus in terms of certain other cosmological commitments that take the heavenly reality Moses saw to be a structure located in the heavens. Jesus' ascension through the heavens allows him to enter this structure and engage in his high-priestly ministry there.

Thus, Heb 8:5 provides a biblical foundation and some warrant for the discussion in Heb 9, wherein the pattern of the wilderness tabernacle is used to explain aspects of where Jesus has gone and presently ministers. Because Moses made the old covenant tabernacle in accord with what he saw on the mountain, the textual depiction of that tabernacle can be used as a kind of map to understand where Jesus has gone since he has entered the very heavenly structure that Moses saw and upon which he designed the earthly model.

While not as cosmologically loaded, the reference to Jeremiah's new-covenant prophecy in Heb 8:8–12 and the citation of Exod 24:8 in Heb 9:20 show a similar commitment to take seriously the pattern of the Mosaic covenant's inauguration when reflecting on that of the new covenant. The author works with the text in a way that appears to assume both that God himself promised a new covenant, but also that since the Mosaic covenant was inaugurated in a particular way, as Exod 24:8 is taken to indicate, so the new covenant must be inaugurated in a similar way. Following the narrative progression of Exodus, in which the inauguration of the old covenant provides the presumed context within which the heavenly tabernacle is revealed to

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<sup>37</sup> For my detailed argumentation of these points see David M. Moffitt, "Serving in the Tabernacle in Heaven: Sacred Space, Jesus's High-Priestly Sacrifice, and Hebrews' Analogical Theology," in *Hebrews in Contexts*, ed. Gabriella Gelardini and Harold W. Attridge, AJEC 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 259–79. Steyn also points out the importance of Exod 25 for Jewish and early Christian reflection on the heavenly sanctuary (*Quest*, 237–40).

Moses and within which the earthly tabernacle can thereby be set up and used, the author of Hebrews locates the inauguration of the new covenant prior to the inaugural entrance into and ongoing ministry of Jesus in the heavenly tabernacle. The nature of the relationship of covenant and tabernacle service in Exodus, therefore, helps one better understand the argument and logic of Hebrews depiction of Jesus' entrance and ministry in the heavenly tabernacle after his death and resurrection.

According to the book of Exodus, one of the reasons for the exodus was to enable God's people to meet with him and to serve/worship him (e.g., Exod 4:23; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1; 10:3, 26; 12:31). The fact that the inauguration of that first covenant preceded the building and inauguration of the tabernacle and service of worship within it suggests that a kind of institution of a place for service, followed by the ongoing maintenance of that service and the relationship it implies is presupposed. God's relationship and prior covenants with the patriarchs clearly indicate that his commitment to Israel precedes the Passover, the exodus, and the Mosaic covenant. In fact, Exodus affirms that the Passover, the exodus, and the people's reception of an inheritance are themselves realities predicated on God's covenant with Abraham (e.g., Exod 2:24; 3:16; 6:7-8; 32:12-13; 33:1). Nevertheless, the latter events hold a special place in establishing and defining God's relationship with his people.

The author of Hebrews clearly thinks in a similar way, as his lengthy citation of Jer 38 LXX demonstrates. Of note, then, is the inauguration of and ongoing worshipping relationship implied in the details of Exodus. The close correlation of covenant and tabernacle evident in Heb 8-9, in other words, follows the pattern of Exodus. Moses first inaugurates the covenant and the tabernacle, then God's people can meet with him and serve him there. In a similar way, Jesus first inaugurates the new covenant and service in the heavenly tabernacle, then approaches God's

presence in that heavenly space to perform his service there, opening the way for God's people to enter and serve him there too.

If the pattern just identified is correct, then one can see how Hebrews maps the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus onto the events of the exodus/covenant inauguration, inauguration of the priesthood and tabernacle, and the work of ongoing worship and covenant maintenance he now performs within that sacred space. This implies further that the author thinks sequentially through various moments of the incarnation and sees within them particular ways in which they contribute to the larger goal of saving God's people. Hebrews, in other words, does not reduce the means of salvation only to the event of Jesus' death on the cross, but sees instead a variety of ways in which particular events that constitute the story of the incarnate Son ultimately issue in God's people receiving the salvation promised to them so long ago. Exodus provides some of the key categories and concepts used by the author to develop his analogical reflection on the salvific work of the Son.<sup>38</sup> Specifically, the author's use of Exodus helps to clarify that Jesus' death is a new Passover moment that defeats the one who holds the power of death, simultaneously liberating his people from their slavery and inaugurating the promised new covenant relationship between God and his people. Jesus' death is, therefore, the new Passover/new covenant inaugurating event.<sup>39</sup> In his resurrection, he is appointed to the role

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<sup>38</sup> As a corollary, this sort of account also helps to explain the author's polyvalent use of the language of "blood" in Hebrews. Blood language is used by the author with reference to the rituals Moses performed to inaugurate the covenant (esp. Heb 9:15–20) and with reference to the sacrificial rituals that effect purification and forgiveness (i.e., sacrificial atonement along the lines depicted in Leviticus, e.g., Heb 9:12–14, 24–26; 13:11–12). In the former case the author connects blood closely with death as he identifies Jesus' death with the inaugural events of the old covenant (here he conflates Passover and the rituals of Exod 24, as arguably Jer 31 presupposes). The latter use of blood language focuses attention on the sacrificial acts of presenting the offering of life to God. The thing that binds these distinct moments together in the case of the new covenant is the person of Jesus himself. The very one who died is the one who rose, who became the great high priest, and who entered the heavenly tabernacle in order to offer himself to the Father and to intercede even now on behalf of his siblings.

<sup>39</sup> As discussed in the preceding note, the close conceptual connection between Passover and covenant inauguration is presumed in Jer 31:32.

of high priest of this new covenant coming into possession of the indestructible life that qualifies him to serve in the heavenly priesthood and elevates him above all the angels. In his ascension, Jesus presents his Yom Kippur offering and begins his ministry of intercession on behalf of his followers.

#### V. Moses, Exodus, Sinai, and Zion

The preceding discussion suggests that Exodus exercises significant influence on the author's conception of Jesus' salvific work and the identity the author wants to inculcate in his audience precisely to the extent that this text provides a pattern for how God liberated his people, inaugurated his covenant with them and then commanded Moses to construct the tabernacle as a means for God and his people to dwell close together within the context of that covenant. The discussion of the new covenant and the tabernacle in Heb 8–9 shows that the author's reflection is shaped, even normed, by aspects of Exodus in important ways.

Hebrews does not, however, slavishly follow Exodus or the exodus narrative. The author, a bit like one sees in other second temple texts that rewrite scripture such as *Jubilees*, feels the freedom to interpret Exodus. His engagement with Exodus is dialogical, working at times from Exodus forwards and at times from his viewpoint as one who confesses Jesus as the Christ backwards. In Hebrews we find Christology both under construction in light of Exodus (and numerous other Old Testament texts) and informing ways that Exodus (and numerous other Old Testament texts) can now be read afresh.

Something of this dynamic can already be seen in the Heb 3–4 where, from the perspective of God's speaking through the Son in "these last days," Hebrews calls its auditors to consider what the exodus generation truly lost when they refused to enter God's rest. For

Hebrews, that generation did not just miss out on obtaining the land of Canaan, which Joshua later led them into, they and those who came later missed out on obtaining the fullness of God's promised rest.

Hebrews 11:23–29 also illustrates the author's freedom to read Exodus in the light of Jesus. Here the author retells the story of Moses from Exodus in a highly condensed form. When he comments that Moses was willing to turn away from the treasures of Egypt and endure abuse on account of Christ because he looked ahead to the reward (11:26), he clearly introduces into Exodus his convictions about the truth of Jesus' identity as the eternal Son who guarantees that the fullness of God's promised inheritance will come to his people. This reading appears to rely on the conviction that author stated at the outset of his homily, the same God who spoke in the past in the prophets now speaks through Jesus, the Son. Moses, as indeed all those who illustrate faith in Heb 11, are counted among the people of God who will all be made perfect together because of Jesus (11:39–40).

The author's comparison in Heb 12:18–24 between the "congregation of the firstborn" who have come to Mount Zion and the events of God's giving the law at Mount Sinai further highlights both the role of Exodus in the homily and the ways in which Hebrews uses Exodus creatively. The debates over the referent of the phrase "congregation of the firstborn" are well known.<sup>40</sup> To the arguments put forward by Helyer and many modern commentators<sup>41</sup> that the author intends to refer to his audience with this language, I would add the following: If Exodus has been in play in the homily, then the identification of the "congregation of the firstborn" around Mount Zion, in contrast to the liberated Israelites around Mount Sinai, would naturally

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<sup>40</sup> See the discussion of the term and engagement with various views in Larry R. Helyer's detailed article, "The *Prōtotokos* Title in Hebrews," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 6 (1976): 3–28, here esp. 12–16.

<sup>41</sup> Helyer, "Prōtotokos," 14–16. See also, e.g., Attridge, *Hebrews*, 375; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC 47b (Dallas: Word, 1991), 468–29; Koester, *Hebrews*, 545.

recall the claims and narrative progression of Heb 2–4. That is to say, the use of “firstborn” language in Heb 12 aligns well with the author’s previous encouragement of the auditors to imagine their liberation from the Devil and their bondage to the power of death in terms of the exodus narrative, particularly given this narrative’s depiction of the protection of the firstborn from the Destroyer at the first Passover and the subsequent liberation of that generation from bondage.<sup>42</sup> If the connection between this narrative and the audience is valid, then all who belong to the congregation addressed by the homily can rightly see analogies between themselves and the firstborn who were protected by the use of the Passover blood when Moses led the people out of Egypt. All in this congregation, including Jesus himself, the great high priest who is the firstborn Son who leads them in worship, have been liberated from death and the Devil.

Another observation is germane. Clearly the narrative underlying the exodus generation metaphor, particularly as this is played out with reference to the congregation of the firstborn in Heb 12 overlaps with Deuteronomy.<sup>43</sup> Deuteronomy plays a significant role in Hebrews’ argument.<sup>44</sup> This overlap, particularly the comparison of the two mountains, marks an element of the author’s creative interaction with Exodus. Yet, Exodus still has a particular role to play, for unlike Deuteronomy, Hebrews does not envision those whom Jesus has liberated and led into the wilderness as being at the end of something like Israel’s forty years of wandering. The author constructs a metaphor of God’s people in the wilderness that crucially locates them at a point *prior* to a Kadesh-Barnea-like event. They are, as it were, at the first opportunity to receive the inheritance.<sup>45</sup> To put the point differently, Hebrews forecloses on any hope of a Deutero-Christos moment analogous to Deuteronomy’s post-forty-years setting. To find oneself wandering as

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<sup>42</sup> Helyer rightly suspects this sort of connection given the new exodus idea in play in Hebrews (“*Prōtotokos*,” 16).

<sup>43</sup> See esp. the discussion of this verse in Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 139–40.

<sup>44</sup> See n. 3 above for a few of the recent studies that focus on this fact.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew Thiessen rightly emphasizes this point (“Hebrews and the End of Exodus,” *NovT* 49 (2007): 353–69.

Israel did for forty years would mean for this author that one has fallen away/failed the test and, like Esau, has lost the inheritance.

This latter point is important just to the extent that modern Hebrews' scholarship has at times overplayed the idea of God's people "wandering" or engaged in "pilgrimage."<sup>46</sup> While the appeal to the motif of journeying has some merit,<sup>47</sup> the location of God's people in the author's exodus generation metaphor suggest a subtle qualification is in order. Those liberated by Jesus' death are not in a state of wandering until Jesus leads them into their inheritance. Rather, the author exhorts them not to fall prey to the same mistake that Israel made at Kadesh Barnea, the rebellion that resulted in the bodies of many of those liberated from Egypt falling in the wilderness (Heb 4:16–19). Hebrews clearly draws from Deuteronomy, but the metaphor that the author uses to develop so much of his exhortation locates the audience much earlier in the Pentateuchal story. As in Exodus, they are in a Sinai-like position, from which they have not and should not move. Yet, as in Deuteronomy, they are at the same time about to receive their inheritance having seen in some sense what it will mean for them if they turn away in unbelief. They stand, as it were, both at the end of Exodus and the beginning of Numbers and at the end of Deuteronomy.<sup>48</sup> They know how the story will play out for them if they choose to behave in the

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<sup>46</sup> As is well known, the case for this as the central theme of Hebrews was powerfully argued by Ernst Käsemann

<sup>47</sup> Throughout Hebrews there are passages that call for the auditors to move forward. These tend to correlate with their current access into the heavenly holy of holies where Jesus presently is (e.g., 4:16; 10:19–22; 12:22–24), and even trace the pattern of Jesus' ascension. The eschatological hope of Hebrews to inherit salvation and the unshakable kingdom, however, tends to be correlated with language of reception of something and/or someone coming to the auditors (e.g., 2:5; 6:5; 9:28; 10:25, 37; 11:10, 13–16, 39–40; 12:28; 13:14). The primary exceptions to this pattern are the discussion of rest in Heb 3–4 (though much here depends on whether the rest is now accessible or a strictly eschatological reality), and the theme of perfection (see esp. 6:1. Hebrews, in other words, works generally with a concept of being able to approach God in worship in heavenly space now (forward motion), while also making it clear the fullness of the eschatological inheritance is something that is going to come to the congregation, and thus something for which they must faithfully wait.

<sup>48</sup> Allen's conclusion that Hebrews "does not just use Deuteronomy; it becomes a new Deuteronomy" (*Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 225) has much to commend it. But the importance of Exodus and the distinction between waiting and wandering should not be downplayed. Here one comes up against the complexity of Hebrews' interaction with scripture.

same way that the firstborn of the exodus generation did. This complex engagement with the Pentateuchal narrative helps to explain why God's people for this author are not being led into the promised land by their Joshua, but are instead waiting for their Joshua, who has gone ahead of them into the inheritance, but will return to them in order to bring the salvation they hope to inherit back with him (Heb 9:28; cf. 1:14).<sup>49</sup> This is also why the parenetic heart of Hebrews beats with the call to persevere and remain faithful while they wait. For Hebrews, there will not be, because there cannot be, a Deuteronomy-like moment in this story.<sup>50</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

The preceding argument surveys some of the most significant ways that Exodus serves to contribute to the pentateuchally-shaped narrative that grounds the author's exodus-generation metaphor, a metaphor he develops as he exhorts his readers to hold fast to their confession about Jesus. This metaphor presents followers of Jesus as a new wilderness generation who must endure struggles and tests while they wait for their new Moses, even their new Joshua, to bring their salvation to them when he returns, both, as it were, coming down from the mountain and coming back from the land. Explicit citation of Exodus does not feature prominently in Hebrews, but the preceding arguments show that the book nonetheless serves as one of the author's most significant intertexts. Not only does this book of the Pentateuch provide him with the essential elements of an overarching narrative consisting of Passover and liberation, covenant

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<sup>49</sup> Otfried Hofius argues this point well writing, "[D]ie Gemeinde [ist] nicht als das zum Himmel wandernde, wohl aber als das auf die Heilsvollendung wartende Gottesvolk gesehen, und der Verfasser will dieses Volk ... mit aller Dringlichkeit dazu aufrufen, die Erwartung nicht preiszugeben, der allein die Erfüllung verheißen ist" (*Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 1/11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 150.

<sup>50</sup> The author's rigorous perspective on the impossibility of restoration should one abandon the community parallels God's harsh judgment of the exodus generation in Ps 95, but also works by way of logic that would require the re-crucifixion of the resurrected and ascended Jesus, something that by virtue of the author's concept of Jesus' resurrection (a resurrection to indestructible life) is impossible. The events that make up the story of the Son's incarnation cannot, that is, be repeated.



inauguration, wilderness period prior to receiving the promised inheritance, and ongoing worship of God at a holy mountain, the central events narrated in Exodus also provide a rich vein of images, language and motifs that he mines throughout his homily.

Two final points are worthy of reflection. First, there are many different elements to the work of the Son in Hebrews. The author's use of the exodus narrative enables him to highlight some of the different ways in which the Son's life, death, resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of the Father, and return to his waiting people each contribute to the larger goal of their salvation—the reception of the unshakable inheritance. Importantly, however, no one event in this sequence is the unifying or central element. The cross, for example, is not the sole focus of the author, for Jesus' death is not itself the unifying soteriological aspect of the incarnation. Rather, Jesus himself, his very person, unifies all these elements. It is for Hebrews Jesus himself, the Son who became incarnate and has returned to his Father in his resurrected humanity who is central to salvation. The work of salvation is unified, in other words, by the very one who can now be seen both to have liberated his people and presently to be interceding for them—Jesus.

Second, however, if the arguments advanced here are more or less correct, then an important implication for reflection on Jesus' atoning work follows. The author's use of Exodus to emphasize the liberating/Passover and covenant inaugurating effect of Jesus' death, together with his equally important emphasis on the subsequent high-priestly work of Jesus in the Father's presence in the heavenly holy of holies (a more Leviticus oriented emphasis), allows the conclusion that the author of Hebrews both distinguished between the roles and importance of Passover and Yom Kippur, while also holding these two salvific moments together in the very narrative of the incarnation of the Son of God.