Understanding Psalm 95 within, and without, Hebrews*

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1. Introduction

When discussing Ps 95 within and without (the Letter to the) Hebrews in biblical theological perspective, we encounter certain hermeneutical presuppositions which cannot be discussed at length in this article.

The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is seen as a strong indication of the coherence of the Bible within itself. Yet, this coherence is manifold and by no means unambiguous—there are allusions, affirmative or contrastive citations and lines of reasoning, and more than once the meaning of the Old Testament text is changed. However, despite the diversity of scripture within scripture, and explicit as well as implicit intertextuality, there still remains a strong bond between the Old and the New Testament. How this correlation between Old and New can be perverted, by insisting on the superiority of the New Testament, becomes clear in some results of Hebrews research, where we find such statements as “Israel wurde verworfen, da es zwar die Gabe des Wortes empfing, sich aber nicht glaubend durch die Gabe binden ließ und insofern den Charakter des Logos als einer auf den Weg schickenden Verheißung verkannte.” The conclusions drawn here are not only hermeneutically questionable; they are fatal in their practical and inter-religious relevance as well.

This is a problem which concerns the Letter to the Hebrews with special urgency, since here a text is presented that has, on one hand, strong dealings with Old Testament allusions and citations, but that, on the other hand, has also been accused of having an anti-judaistic implication. Therefore a closer look at Hebrews and its specific dealing with

* For Bernd Janowski, in celebration of his 65th birthday.

the Old Testament is necessary. The present study is meant as a contribution to the aforementioned task—by examining the use of Ps 95 in Hebrews, the larger issue of the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews will become clearer. In order for this exercise to be successful, some valuations have to be unfolded first, in contradiction to the aforementioned hermeneutical prejudices of Käsemann and others.

In my opinion, dealing with both parts of the twofold Christian Bible as a whole cannot place hermeneutical precedence on either the Old or New Testament. Both testaments bear witness to the same revelation and to the same God. Thus they are on an equal theological level, and have the same value concerning the understanding of Christianity. The consequences hereof can be described in the hermeneutical model of a canonical dialog, one which is contrastive, but which similarly has to keep in mind that the first part of our Holy Scripture is part of another world religion. Practically speaking, this means that my exegesis has to justify the interpretation of the text against the backdrop of Jewish-Christian relations.

My intentions, when approaching Ps 95 in Hebrews as an Old Testament scholar, are modest. Following the train of thought in the Masoretic version of the book of Psalms, I ask for serious hermeneutical changes in Hebrews by drawing Ps 94 LXX into the discussion of Heb 3 and 4. Searching for continuities and discontinuities, my core question will be the consequences of the psalm’s reception and apparent “updating” in the Letter to the Hebrews. As Hebrews relies strongly on Ps 94 LXX, I have to consider the Greek version of Ps 95 MT as well.

2. Understanding Psalm 95 without Hebrews

How to understand Ps 95 MT without Hebrews? As a framework for my exegetical observations in this regard I have to mention some of the methodological starting points for more recent psalms exegesis: (1) the withdrawal of the genre and the traditional genre criticism of Gunkel and Mowinckel (Gattungskritik); (2) the recent tendency to move from the single psalm to the Psalter as a whole, and thus to contextualize the psalm; and (3) the accent or redactional criticism of the psalms. In following these tendencies there are several levels of interpretation of Ps 95 which should be kept in mind: (1) the basic level is the psalm in itself; (2) the next higher level is that of the neighbouring psalms and the concatenation—the psalm has to be considered in the context of the Royal Psalms, or the so-called YHWH-has-become-king Psalms; (3) then it has to be examined in the larger context of the fourth psalm book (Pss 90–106); (4) and finally it needs to be considered in the context of the Psalter as a whole.4

Psalm 95 forms part of fourth book of the Psalms, which begins with the focus on Moses. The third book is determined by the Asaphite and Korahite dominance in Pss 73–83 and 84–89 (with the exception of Ps 86, a Davidic Psalm, and the last psalm—Ps 89, which is ascribed to the Ezrahite Etan). With Ps 89 the third book has come to a dark end—the earthly kingdom, with a Davidic successor on the Jerusalem throne, has ceased (Ps 89:40). The whole fourth book seems to be a struggle with this rock-bottom of hope, developing a new and lasting perspective through remembrance of, and reflection on, anthropological boundaries and the confession of the sole king YHWH. By mentioning Moses in Ps 90, the beginning of the fourth book is like a beat of the drum. In the previous book there is only one citation of Moses, together with Aaron, at the end of Ps 77: “You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (נֵתְנָה נִרְגָּדָה, פְּגוֹמָה פְּגוֹמָה). Now, at the beginning of the fourth book, it is Moses bringing his לאמחים. The superscription renders לאמחים לאמחים. The following psalms, Pss 91 and 92, have no heading at all. Like the whole group of Royal Psalms (Pss 93–100), our Ps 95 also has no heading. After the fulminating end of the group of Royal Psalms in Ps 100, Ps 101 starts again with David, last mentioned in Ps 89:50. Inside this framework of the expected psalm composer David, we have a vacuum-like lacuna which is filled by Moses, causing the fourth book of the psalms to have a mosaic accent. Besides Ps 90, and the reflection of the Wilderness in the cited passage of Ps 95, there is also an explicit reference to Moses and Aaron (and Samuel) in Ps 99:6–9. The next mention of Moses is to be found in Ps 103—not only through the quotation of the grace formula ( Gnadenformel), but also through reference to the revelation of the Law in v. 7.

4. As the numerous references in my footnotes testify, I am strongly indebted to the continuing focus on the Psalms and on Psalter exegesis by Erich Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld.

which takes up Ps 90:16: “He revealed to Moses his ways, his great deeds to the children of Israel” (NIV). That Moses plays a crucial role in the retrospection on the history of Israel in Ps 105:26–45 is quite expected, but the dominance of this section in the flashback of the whole history is conspicuous. The fourth book ends with a broad reference to the Exodus and the Wilderness period in Ps 106:8–33. So, even without being called a “Mosaic Psalter,” the tendency of the fourth book to accentuate Moses and his time (the Exodus, Sinai, and the Wilderness) is unmistakable. Judging from the lecturing tone of the whole fourth book, Moses plays a prominent role in this part of the Psalter. In this context it should not be surprising that Ps 95 argues intensively with the Wilderness period. Within the “Mosaic Psalter” Ps 95 functions as part of a framework for the Royal Psalms. The parallels with Ps 100 are striking:

Ps 95

Ps 100

Structurally, the most convincing argument is that of the covenant formula, which occurs comparably only in Pss 33:12 and 144:15 in the shepherd metaphor for YHWH (which is attested to outside of the forth book only in the Asaphite Psalms, Pss 74:1; 79:13). There can be no doubt as to the fact that these two psalms (Ps 95 and 100) are compositionally parallel, and arranged as sort of twins. Jörg Jeremias published an excellent article in 1998 in Skrif en Kerk in which he argues that Ps 100 cites Pss 93–99. Hossfeld and Zenger argue, with Jeremias, that

Ps 100 is a composition which is oriented to Pss 95; 96, and 98, and is configured as the keynote of the original composition of Pss 93; 95; 96; 98; 100. According to Hossfeld and Zenger, “Ps 100 bildet die beabsichtigte Klimax; er ist zu diesem Zweck eigens verfertigt worden und nimmt gezielt die Ps 95; 96 und 98 auf.” However, when closely examined, the congruities of Ps 100 with Ps 96 and 99 are less significant than its broad congruity with Ps 95. Indeed, although Ps 96 and 100 share common terminology—the phrase בַּדְּיָם (Ps 96:2; 100:4), the word מַלְאָכֵי (Ps 96:13; 100:5), the imperative יְּשָׁרָא (Ps 96:8; 100:2, 4), and the word בֶּרֶכָה of the temple (Ps 96:8 and 100:4)—in the case of Ps 98 there is not much more than the phrase הרָוְיָא, which is also used in Ps 96:4 and 100:1, and the two terms מַלְאֹךְ (Ps 98:3 and 100:5). The lines between Ps 93 and 100 are flimsy. So, the strongest accent is on the parallels between Ps 95 and 100. Both psalms are redactionally configured twins. In short, I agree with David M. Howard’s assertion that “Psalm 100 answers the question that might arise from the end of Psalm 95, which is ‘Has YHWH rejected succeeding generations?’ The answer is ‘No!’”

Let us now look at the psalm itself and at its structure. There is a consensus among scholars that we have a very well structured first part in vv. 1–7, followed by a second part in vv. 8–11. This second part has a less well-defined structure, and ends with the dark declaration: “They shall never enter into my rest.” In direct opposition to this end, the psalm starts off very positively with an imperative plural, יִשָּׁרָא, paralleled by the imperative at the beginning of v. 6, יְּשָׁרָא. Both imperatives, which divide the first part of the psalm into two further parts, are followed by four (vv. 1–2) and three cohortatives (v. 6). While the imperatives designate a call for neering with praise, and for the cultic approach to the sanctuary, the cohortatives describe the praise and form coevally as a performative act of praise whose subject is the speaker of the psalm. At the same time as

Ps 100 is much more closely associated with the important “brick” of Ps 95:1–7. However, the proposal of William M. Schnedewind (“Are We His People or Not? Biblical Interpretation during Crisis,” Bib 76 [1995]: 546–47 [549]) that Ps 100 is a pre-exilic hymn of thanksgiving, which was reflected in Ps 95 and other psalms, is unlikely.

6. Against Ballhorn (Telos, 93), Moses cannot be the speaker of the psalm performed in the temple.

7. See Jörg Jeremias, “Psalm 100 als Auslegung von Ps 93–99 “,” Skrif en Kerk 19 (1998): 605–15 (613). In this article Jeremias stated the connections between Pss 95; 96 and 100 and restricted the parallels with Ps 95 mostly to Ps 100:3: “Waren die Rahmennaussagen in Ps 100 (V. 1,5) von Ps 98 bestimmt und die inneren Rahmennaussagen von (V. 2,4) von Ps 96, so ist der zentrale V. 3 von Ps 95 gepärt. Alle drei Kola in V. 3 sind abgewandelte Zitate aus Ps 95:7a.” I am convinced that

8. Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalmen 51–100, 34.

9. David M. Howard, The Structure of Psalms 93–100 (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 5; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 141.

10. A survey of the recent literature will reveal that there are many other proposals for the structure of Ps 95; for example, Jörg Jeremias has suggested two parts in vv. 1–5 and vv. 6–11.
the speaker is calling for the hymnal praise which is justified by the deeds of God in vv. 3–5 and 7a, the speaker himself is also performing this praise, which he wants the addressee to perform, exemplarily.

The praise is expressed through the use of seven cohortatives שָׂרָה יָרָהּ (v. 6), נָרָה יָרָהּ (v. 2), יָרָה הָאֵל (v. 1)—which interact with each other: rejoice; shout for joy; come before; raise a load shout; bow down; bend the knees; kneel.11 The first four—syntactically split carefully in two colometrically equivalent parts—are each enhanced with an addressee (introduced with ו), or a nomen (introduced with תִּשְׁמָר), and are arranged asyndetically. The second three are ordered in a syndetic chain, and only the last one is extended by the specification of direction לִפְנֵי יְהוָה. While the first four cohortatives express acts of praise, the second three aim to perform acts of veneration. The first part of the psalm looks like a processional hymn (Prozessionshymnen),12 divided in two phases: the way upward and inward into the sanctuary; and then the adoration inside the Temple or in the courts of the Temple (Tempeleinlassliturgie). This framework is oriented to the covenant formulae in v. 7a.

The very positive prelude in v. 1 parallels יִרְאוּ and בָּרֹא as acts of joy and jubilation. The pair (יִרְאוּ and בָּרֹא) occurs in the Asaphite Ps 81:2, and again in Ps 98:4.13 The addressee of the synonyms is God. The Tetragrammaton that is used is connected to the יִרְאוּ הָאֵל of Ps 94:23. At the end of the verse the addressee is יִרְאוּ הָאֵל, which resembles Ps 94:22. This is neither an implicit reference to the temple, nor an association with the water-producing rock which Moses struck in Exod 17:6 (Num 20 misses the term).14 Rock has no special significance in Old Testament

cultic categories—it is never described as the aim of any cultic action or as the destination of any pilgrimage; neither in the Pilgrimage Psalms, nor in Ps 27:5. יִרְאוּ הָאֵל is much more likely to be the usual metaphorical epitheton for the saving God, the one who intervenes in favour of the one who is pressed hard. The metaphor thus expresses the idea of a stronghold or a fortress, and is often combined with other building metaphors.15 Marked by the suffix, יָרָה is portrayed as the rock of the addressed (cultic) community. Thus the psalm starts with references to יָרָה as the saviour of his people. The second verse refers to the favour of v. 1 by way of enclitic personal pronouns, and mentions two acts of praise. The first verb (ָרֹא) expresses a cultic approach as in Pss 88:14 and 119:147, or a processional motion as in Ps 89:15. It is specified by רָאֵי ("in the mode of thanksgiving," Ps 69:3; 104:4; 147:7). This act is paralleled by the songs what are presented in reversed order, so that יֵשֶׁל becomes an asyndetic pair. It seems to be a pilgrimage-like situation: coming to the sanctuary with a ceremony which includes prayer and song.17

The second three cohortatives start anew, like v. 1, with an imperative. The second imperative, יִרְאוּ, can be taken as symbolizing the second phase of the nearing. While approaching the throne of the saving God with songs of thanksgiving and moving inside in the first part, we now seem to have entered the temple, with the speaker calling for acts of veneration in front of the throne. Interesting to note is that there are no other references in which these three verbs symbolize the act of adoration. The terms יִרְאוּ and יֵשֶׁל are attested on only three other occasions in the Psalms (Pss 5:8; 86:9; 132:7). The verb יִרְאוּ appears to be a specialized term for "nearing" in the sanctuary. One can presume that יֵשֶׁל describes a cultic movement towards God, one which seems subsequent to the actions of praise in v. 1. Comparable to this nearing in Ps 95 are the three other יִרְאוּ imperatives in the Psalter: in Ps 96:3, "Ascribe to הָיָה the glory of his name, bring gifts and enter his courts," and the very narrow parallel in Ps 100:1b–4 with two imperatives of יִרְאוּ in vv. 2, 4, "Make a joyful noise to יָרָה, all you on earth! Serve יָרָה with gladness.

13. Cf. יִרְאוּ in Ps 98:6; thus attested twice in these two psalms. The other occurrences of the combination יִרְאוּ with יֵשֶׁל are in Job 38:7; Ps 98:4; Isa 16:10; 44:23; Zeph 3:14.
15. Cf. Hossfeld, "Psalms 95, 32.
16. Cf. Isa 17:10 and Ps 18:47/2 Sam 22:47. The metaphor also appears in fragmented form in various instances of parallelism in 2 Sam 22:23; Ps 18:3; 31:3; 62:8; 71:3. The combination with suffixed יָרְאִי and יֵשֶׁל is found further in Deut 32:15; Pss 62:3, 7; 89:27.
17. Hossfeld, "Psalms 95, 32. For the connection of Ps 95 with the Festival Psalms Ps 50 and 81, see, in addition to Hossfeld, Jörg Jeremias, Keilschrift und Gerichtsvorverständigung in der späten Königzeit Israels (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), passim; Kruus, Psalmen 60–150, 832.
Know that YHWH—he alone—is God. He has made us and we belong to him, we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, go into his courts with songs of praise. Praise/Thank him, bless/praise his name. 18

The liturgical setting of the described scene is further influenced by the three cohortatives that follow. These are not synonyms, but they are very similar in their meaning (יָבֹא, יַבֹּא, יָבַע, יִבָּע: “bow down,” “bow low,” “kneel”). The direction evoked by the verbs is downwards; they incline to the earth, minimizing the worshipper in the face of the greatness of the deity, and so signalize subordination. They do not evoke a movement from standing to lying on the ground, 19 though the arrangement does begin with the common term הָעַד hitt. (cf. first of all Ps 99:5, 98), which connotes prosynkeiy. The other two terms can express the bending of the knee(s), which is used as a gesture of adoration (1 Kgs 8:54; 2 Kgs 1:13; 2 Chr 6:13; Ezra 9:5). The verb יָבֹא also means “to crouch, to huddle” (e.g. Gen 49:9; Num 24:9; Judg 5:27). 21 The second verb יָבַע, “to kneel,” is very unusual and occurs only three times (Gen 24:11; Ps 95:6; 2 Chr 6:13), but bowing the knees is a very commonly used phrase.

The description of these cutiac acts is completed by the re-uptake of the הָעַד of v. 1 as the addressee in v. 6 (with הָעַד— the same God of salvation who is praised in v. 1 is now adored in v. 6.

Of special importance are the two sections that justify the solemn call for the hymnic adoration in vv. 3–5, and the shorter one in v. 7a—both of which are syntactically introduced with וב. Verse 3 justifies the hymn through a description of the magnitude of the benevolent God. He is the רָאי (Deut 7:21; Ps 77:14), and the מִלְחַמָּם 21 When searching for parallels, 20 especially Ps 89:7–8 combines this praise with the assembly of the gods: “Who in the skies can compare with Yahweh? Who among the sons of God can rival him? God, awesome in the assembly of holy ones (הַנַּחֲלָה), great and dreaded among all who surround him” (לע), Compared to the other gods in the divine assembly, YHWH is a great king (Ps 47:3). 24 On these grounds v. 3 forms the explicit anchor for the insertion of this somewhat Asaphite Festival Psalm into the group of Royal Psalms (93–100).

The הָעַד-sentence is now followed by two relative clauses, which are carefully arranged. By the double הָעַד, the independent pronoun וה, and the double יָבֹא, we are pointed back syntactically to v. 3. However, the form indicates that these two sentences are intended to be understood as parallel. The declaration of possession (Eigentümsdeklaration) in v. 4 is clearly linked to the reference to creation in v. 5. Together they span the whole world, representing both axes of the mental worldview. Though the hapax legomenon הָעַד remains unsolved, there is a consensus that it should be associated with the vertical axis. They are paralleled to the highest peaks of the hills (הַר), and therefore mostly translated with “depths” or the like. The merism in v. 5 describes a horizontal axis: from the Mediterranean Sea in the west (הָעַד), to the arid desert (הָעַד) in the east. But both pairs have a double duty—not only do they span the spatial dimensions of the world view (Weltrichtung), they also have cosmological associations. It is in Gen 1:9f. that God divides the water (which is called הָעַד in v. 10) from the שָׁמִיש (cf. Jonah 1:9). 25 The second relative clause in v. 5 makes the context of creation explicit, by using two of the most common verbs for creation (מרָה and רֵא). Through the parallel structure of vv. 4 and 5, the Eigentümsdeklaration (מרָה and רֵא) is thus substantiated by the act of creation. As in Deutero-Isaias, YHWH is the great king who rules over all gods, a position he assured for him by the fact that he created the whole world. He reigns over the peaks of the mountains, where gods used to dwell, and his sphere of influence reaches to the border of the netherworld, though probably—if we accept a

18. Translations of Psalms, if not otherwise attested, by Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 2.


20. There is an intimate compositional relationship between Ps 95 and the "Trishagion" in Ps 99 (see Ruth Sorel-Sick, Trishagion and Gottesanderschaft: Psalm 99 als Nutzung unter Vor und Propheten [Stuttgart: Katholische Bibelwerk, 1989], and Erich Zenger, “Das Weltknigmentum des Gottes Israels [Ps 90–106],” in Der Gott und die Völker: Untersuchungen zum Jesuakon und zu den Psalmen [ed. N. Lohfink und E. Zenger; SBS 154; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholische Bibelwerk, 1994], 159–60), which encloses the imperative to bow down before YHWH (Ps 99:5; 9; cf. Ps 95:6), the greatness of God (Ps 99:2; cf. Ps 95:3), the designation as “our God” (Ps 99:5, 8, 9; cf. Ps 95:7) and the reference to the covenant (the covenant formula of Ps 95:5 is, on the one hand, explained in Ps 99, and, on the other hand, enhanced so as to include not only Israel but all nations). Both psalms refer to the wilderness and to the Sinai tradition, the protagonists being Moses and Aaron.

21. As a gesture of adoration it is used in 1 Kgs 8:54; 19:18; 2 Kgs 1:13; 2 Chr 7:3; 29:29; Ezra 9:5; Est 3:5; Isa 45:23.


23. The greatness of God is praised in a similar way in Ps 40:17; 70:5; 71:19; 77:14; 86:10; 89:9; 104:1.

24. Ps 96:4; 97:9; 1 Chr 16:25, cf. אֲדֹנָי אָדָם עָלָיו, Exod 18:11; 2 Chr 2:4; Ps 135:5; מִלְחַמָּם, Exod 15:11)

25. In most cases, besides Gen 1:10, the combination of הָעַד and רֵא hints at the Exodus tradition (see Exod 14:16, 22, 29; 15:19; Neh 9:11; Ps 66:6).
post-exilic date for the psalm—this area is also to be included. The whole vertical and horizontal world is his, because he has made it. Rightly, Hossfeld therefore rejects the attempt of Hermann Spieckermann to dissociate vv. 4 and 5 diachronically:

Eine literarhistorische Abgrenzung der V. 4–5, insbesondere von V. 5a–b, wie bei Spieckermann empfiehlt sich nicht. Spieckermann möchte die Eigentumserklärungen von V. 4–5a als ältere Bestandsgarantie und Betonung der Erhaltung der Welt trennen vom Rekurs auf die prima creatio in dem Abschnitt V. 5a–b.  

Beside the parallel structure, the main argument is the double axis of vv. 4–5, which describes consistently the territorial, and therefore cosmological, dominion of YHWH (cf. Neh 9:6).

While v. 5, with its explicit creation theme, has come to a close, and while v. 6 starts anew with the imperative וַיִּשָּׁנָה, the creation theme is surprisingly brought into the psalm one more time with the last word in v. 6, וַיִּשָּׁנָה. This term shifts the focus of creation from the cosmological to the anthropological and the covenantal dimension. The speaker thus takes the whole community, who were all prompted to worship ("let us..."), into an individual and personal relationship to YHWH as creator of humanity. Coevally, the collective dimension of this relationship, which is made explicit in the covenant-formula of v. 7, is insinuated. While the "who has made us" in v. 6b was an implicit rationale for the adoration of the king, the rationale now becomes syntactically explicit with ו. The second justification clause is the climax of the first part of the psalm. The narrow relationship between God and the addressee is maintained by way of the double enclitic and independent personal pronouns וַיִּשָּׁנָה. As in other deuteronomicistic texts, the covenant formula is bilateral, not unilateral as in priestly literature. There is no stronger tie between God and his people than that of the covenant formula, which is seldom attested to in the Psalter (Ps 110:3; and implicit in the beatitudes Ps 33:12; 144:15).  

The second part of the covenant formula is enhanced by extending the metaphor of the pasture with the flock. This aims to strengthen the relationship between God and his people, as Hossfeld has argued: "YHWH is both the owner and the creator of his flock." "His hand" in v. 7 links up with the frame created by the use of "his hand" in vv. 4 and 5. At the end of v. 7a we have a romantic ambience, which seems to be completely in harmony. The relationship between God and his people seems to be intact.

The breakdown, which comes in v. 7b, is unexpected and surprising: "In 7b fällt nun plötzlich der Hinweis auf eine prophetische Rede in das Huldigungsgeschehen ein." The issue of whether a base of the psalm in vv. 1–7a was extended by adding vv. 7b–11 has to be left aside in the present study. I can only state briefly that this is a question that has been discussed extensively, and is even now being debated. In agreement with W. S. Prinsloo, F.-L. Hossfeld has argued recently (against T. Seidt) for the unity of the psalm. Though I agree with E. Zenger that there are several reasons to see vv. 7b–11 as a redactional addition, but this is not relevant to the present study. For this we have to interpret the final form of Ps 95.

We can, however, look at the significant change that occurs in v. 7b. G. Braulik states: "Aus einem statistisch ausgewogenen Schema wird im Schlüssein ein massiver Unruheherd." The change is experienced as abrupt because of the predominant, and somewhat mysterious, וַיִּשָּׁנָה ("today"), which syntactically has no real linkage. Whether it be a current date, a special date, or the recurring date of a festival is unclear.

26. Hossfeld, "Psalm 95": ibid, "Psalmenauslegung im Psalter," in Schriftauslegung in der Schrift (ed. R. G. Kratz, T. Krüger and K. Schmid; BZAW 300; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000); Hossfeld and Zenger (Psalms 2) date the psalm between the late exilic and the post-exilic period. The world-view and the supremacy over the other gods, the elaborate creation theology and the intertextual citations of the priestly Wilderness story, the reception of the almost finally Pentateuchal, and the mixed language argue for a clearly post-exilic date in the Second Temple period. In respect of the above-mentioned arguments a pre-exilic dating between the first and second deportation (Jeremias, Königum, 113) does not seem convincing.


30. Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 2, 461.

31. There seems no need to change the MT; cf. ibid., 458.

32. Kraus, Psalmen 60–150, 831.


of the feast-liturgy? A prophetic admonition (prophetische Mahnrede)? Or a “simple” theological reflection and fallback on the Torah?

First we should try to differentiate between the complex situations of the speaker, the addressee(s), and the direction of the speech. Verse 8 starts with a vettive. The addressee is the same as in v. 7b: the present generation, of whom the speaker forms a part, up to v. 7. Neither the speaker, nor the addressee(s) seem to have changed. The reference is syntactically underlined through the enclitic personal pronoun in לָאָשׁ הָוָה בְכֵלָהָו. They should not harden their hearts as at “Meribah” and as in the “day of Massah in the desert.” Here, the expected coherence seems to be broken, since the present generation had not been in the desert and had not hardened their hearts in the Wilderness. Yet, because the generation of Massah and Meribah will only be mentioned explicitly in v. 9, the two generations seem to be merged here into one. By a simple trick, namely the elision of an explicit “the generation of your fathers” in the comparison, the addressed generation seems to be admonished not to refuse again. Verse 9 switches to the Exodus generation, and ends any possible confusion with a relative clause which makes it clear that God is the speaker, and mentions the fathers as subject of וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל. The enclitic personal pronoun in בֶּן הָאָבֶל is the last explicit presence of the addressee in the psalm. From now on all references mention the Exodus generation.

The subject again changes in v. 10. The verse formulates the reaction of God to the testing and the trying of the Exodus generation with two verbs which have God as subject. The first one expresses a very strong affect (יָקָשָׁה), and the second one refers to a speech act of God which expresses a bipartite judgment on the attitude of the Exodus generation. Regarding the tense and the discourse point in the “narrative,” this speech is in a completed past (even though it is formulated in wayyiqtol). The last sentence is once again joined with the relative particle, though now it has a causative meaning. God refers to an oath in which he swore his wrath, now applied to the Exodus generation, who shall not come into his מֶלֶךְ.

Because a discourse cannot start with מָזָה, syntactically there is no other choice than to let the speech of God begin in v. 8. Thus God is clearly addressing the present generation, by admonishing them not to act like the Exodus generation. This parenetic goal is attained through a creative exegesis of the Wilderness period. The episode of Massah and Meribah is not the reason for the death of the Exodus generation in the

desert, nor is this verdict given at the end of the forty years. This is an arbitrary interpretation of the Pentateuchal tradition in Ps 95. Accordingly, we have to look deeper at the content of the discourse.

In the Pentateuchal traditions the term הב ר מ is not related to the Wilderness period and the murmuring tradition. Though striking, הב ר מ is scarce (Exod 7:3; Prov 28:14; Ezra 3:7), while הב ר מ is more common. Most relevant is Ezek 3:7: “But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart.” In deuteronomistic, or deuteronomistically influenced, texts הב ר מ stands for the refusal of God’s will (Deut 10:16; 2 Kgs 17:14; Jer 7:26; 17:23; 19:15; Neh 9:16, 17, 29), and it is meant in the same way here. The place that is named first, Meribah, is associated with the hardening of hearts. Also connected to Meribah is the story before Sinai in Exod 17:7—the striking of the rock after the death of Miriam in Kadesh (Num 20:13, 24; 27:14; Deut 32:51; 33:8; Ps 106:32; Ezek 47:19; 48:28 and indefinitely in Ps 81:8). Masarah, the second place named, is missing in Num 20 and is merely associated with the story in Exod 17. It is mentioned further in Deut 6:16; 9:22; 33:8. Both place names are combined only in Exod 17:7 and Deut 33:8. It seems that Ps 95:8 consciously combines the two names by adopting the end-compositional arrangement of the two quarrels in the whole extension of the Wilderness journey. This is further substantiated by the combination of the two verbs, הב ר מ and הב ר מ, in v. 9, as well as the forty-year span in v. 10. The interpretation of the quarrel as a test occurs first in the question of Moses in Exod 17:2 (ה ר מ רב ר מ ו נ ה ר מ ו ל ק ר), and is adopted in the commandment of Deut 6:16: “Do not put Yahweh your God to the test as you tested him at Masarah.”

While the Wilderness journey is often interpreted as a temptation of his people, the Psalms follow the line of Exod 17:2 in Ps 78:18, 41, 56 and 106.38 הב ר מ occurs in the Pentateuchal tradition and usually has God as subject. Only in Mal 3:10, 15 is יHVH, as object of a test, described with הב ר מ. This relatively free reference to the Pentateuchal tradition is underlined further with the deeds of God, which the Exodus generation has seen. The term הב ר מ seems to comprise not only the donation of water at Masarah and Meribah, but also the whole Exodus tradition.39 Perhaps ספ ל ה ר מ א 米 רא ע ל ה ר מ, which takes into account the fact that the murmuring begins immediately after the liberation (Exod 15–17). Yet it is possible, too, that the term includes all the deeds in the Exodus and the Wilderness tradition, or at least with reference to vv. 4 and 5, from creation onwards (the whole “Heilsgeschichte”). Verse 10 culminates in a judgment which takes into account the whole Wilderness tradition. That Israel’s behaviour was repellent for forty years, and that God is the subject of the verb הב ר מ, is unique in the Old Testament.40 Important to note is that it is not the Exodus generation’s behaviour that provokes disgust—rather, it is the whole generation, which is destined to die in the desert. A comparable situation can be found in the Deuteronomic, or deuteronomistically influenced, passages in Num 32:13; Deut 1:35; 2:14; and 32:20.

The self-quotations in v. 10, הב ר מ ל ו ל, הב ר מ, is not used in the Wilderness context, but it reminds loosely of the phrase הב ר מ ל ו ל (Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13), and the harsh prophetic critique, הב ר מ ל ו ל, in Jer 16:12; 18:12. Verse 10b picks up the הב ר מ of v. 8. The Exodus generation was completely depraved, except for Caleb and Joshua and those who were under twenty years of age. הב ר מ is typical when expressing ethical deviation, an aspect highlighted by the second half of v. 10b, which begins with the last word of the first half of v. 10b (בד). The people did not know God’s ways (cf. Exod 18:20, 33:13), meaning they did not obey his laws. The way metaphor symbolizes an ethical life and a legal context (Ps 103:7; cf. Deut 9:16, 28:9 et al.). הב ר מ is a synonym of Torah, with an emphasis on the deuteronomic tradition and its successors. The Torah context of v. 10 fits well with the line coming from the first part of the psalm. As in the motif of the pilgrimage of the nations (Isa 2; Mic 4), the adoration of the magnificent king has as a complement the praise of the Torah and its observance.

Yet the discourse of God is not finished yet. The last sentence is part of the self-citation of God, and the oath mentioned is not attested in the Pentateuch literally, either. Again it is the deuteronomic and priestly


39. Analogous is, for example, the term הב ר מ א in the prayer of penitence in Neh 9:16–17: “But they and our ancestors acted arrogantly, grew obstinate and flouted your commands. They refused to obey, forgetful of the wonders which you had worked for them; they grew obstinate and made up their minds to return to their slavery in Egypt!” (n10).

spy story in Numbers and Deuteronomy which offers the factual and literal nearest parallels. First there is the retrospection in Num 32:10f., which cites the oath of Num 14:21–23: “And YHWH’s anger burned that day and he swore, saying: ‘None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow me fully.’” Also to be noted is Deut 1:34f.: “Yahweh heard the voice of your words and he got angry and swore: ‘Not one of these people, this evil generation, will see this good land I swore to give your ancestors.’” Though the differences between Ps 95 and these texts are obvious, these parallels do lead to the oath in Ps 95:11 being understood in the context of the land, and to the exclusion of the Exodus generation from the land. The land is not mentioned explicitly: לֶבֶן, not אֶרֶץ follows the אֶרֶץ. It is generally noted that the final phrase אֶרֶץ לְעֹלָם נְתַנְתִּי (“they will not come to my rest”) has a parallel in Deut 12:9. Braulik has argued that here נְתַנְתִי and נְתַנְתִי are not, in fact, synonyms, but are differentiating terms which see the land besides the temple as target. This is further substantiated by the first part of the psalm and the context of the group of Royal Psalms: “Der Kontextbezug der JHWH-König-Psalmen votiert ebenso für einen Tempelbezug (vgl. Ps 93, 5; 94, 22f.; 96, 8f.; 97, 8; 99, 2; 100, 4).” Then again, Hossfeld has rightly pointed out that נְתַנְתִי can be understood as a metaphor, indicating the inextricable relationship between God and his people. The ambiguity at the end of the psalm is intended, as the end of the psalm has to be taken over into the present generation, who are admonished by this divine discourse. It is the land, the temple and the covenant coevally that Israel is in danger of losing if the present generation is as intractable as the Exodus generation. The present post-exilic Israel, coming into the temple with hymns of thanksgiving, is hereby confronted with the salvatory power of the King of the World, who has established a lively relationship with Israel in the land, updated and experienced in his temple.

The most serious alteration made to the reception of the Wilderness tradition, as well as the judgment over the Exodus generation theme, is the chronological placement of the determination that “they will not come into my rest.” The wrath of YHWH, which causes the judgment, has grown in the forty years in the desert after the spy story. The רֹאֲבֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל, which are not the result, but only the precursors to the judgment. Only by these phrases, which determine the sense of the psalm, can one harmonize it with the Wilderness tradition. If there is any misunderstanding the dependence of the psalm on its determining pretexts, the psalm becomes a harsh rupture of the land promise. But such a (mis)reading is only possible if one cuts off vv. 8–11 from the context of vv. 1–7. While Israel is rejoicing in the temple, it has come into “his rest,” meaning that v. 11 can only be understood in conformity with the Wilderness tradition being understood as a reference to the Exodus generation alone. This is one of the pivotal points in Heb 3 and 4, where the question arises: “Why is there no Israel in his rest after Joshua?” I want to summarize and continue the interpretation of Ps 95 without Hebrews in seven points, paying special interest to the function of vv. 8–11, since these are of the most relevance to Heb 3 and 4:

1. The presumed date of composition for the final form of Ps 95, based on vv. 7b–11, is certainly post-exilic, beacuse it presupposes late priestly and deuteronomistic texts. A late exilic or early post-exilic date is excluded because of the mixed language and the reception of the almost finalized Pentateuch.

2. It is by no means by chance that the Wilderness tradition is taken up in Ps 95—the whole fourth book of the Psalter has a concern for Moses.

3. Verses 8–11 are a sort of creative exegesis, an update of the revelation in the Wilderness. The addressee is the present Israel {וֹדֵעֵד}, which has come to the temple to worship YHWH in the original context of a now unidentifiable festival. In its present context as part of the group of Royal Psalms, Ps 95 functions (together with Ps 100) as a frame and link between Israel’s adoration and the adoration of all the nations respectively the whole earth (Ps 100:1).

4. The speech of God is cited by the speaker of the psalm. Therefore vv. 8–11 should not be understood as a word of God revealed on the date of the festival. It is more likely that it is an update of the Wilderness tradition in the Israelite cult, a new application of the given Pentateuchal tradition in a creative way. The assumptions regarding scribal theology and festival practice do not exclude each other diametrically, but complement each other. Thus, we do not have to reinstall the employed “cult prophet” who annullates his oracles to the festival community.

5. Verses 8–11 describe the whole Wilderness tradition as a time determined by quarrel and disobedience. The reference to Massah and Meribah serves to encompass the whole of those forty years. The framing water-related quarrels of Exod 17 and Num 20 are combined with the pivotal points, which are the spy story and the refusal of the land as the central promise and
benefaction. Within the whole discourse it is clear that the exclusion of the דעון was justified by, and limited to, the Exodus generation, and that the present generation has come into his rest. In this way the base line of the psalm can be described as grace, not punishment—as forgiveness, not wrath.

6. The disgust at the people is an affective exaggeration which underlines the parenetical aim. The whole speech functions as an admonition that the given land and the nearness of God are revocable. Verses 8–11 are not meant as a threat, but hook up to the core of v. 1–7—the hymnal praise of the Rock of Salvation. The election of Israel is imbedded in a cosmological dimension of creation and of the reign of the kingly God. The covenant with his people in v. 7 forms part of God’s cosmological power and of his dominion of the world. The goal of history is the salvation of Israel in his rest: the temple, the land and the presence. Thus the function of the citation is clearly positive and not negative. The term “Drohheitschaft” used by Grässer is missing the deeper sense of the admonition.

7. The fact that the addressee of vv. 8–11 is the present Israel as God’s chosen, and not discarded, people, is a crucial point. Many of the older New Testament commentaries fail in this regard, insofar as they ascribe the wrath of ייהוה not to the Exodus generation, but to the present Israel. Ernst Käsemann, Ottfried Hofius and others centriste to impose a substitution theology insofar as they do not admit the present addressee to have come into his rest. The use of terms such as “abolition,” “cancelled promise,” “loss of salvation,” “failure,” “surpassing,” and so on are typical in this context. For example, Friedrich Delitzsch states: “Weil das Gottesvolk in der Wüste aufgrund seines Unglaubens nicht an den göttlichen Ruheort gelangen konnte, bleibt er sicher aufgespart für diejenigen, denen Gott mit dem neuen ‘Heute’ (4,7) eine bessere Chance eröffnet hat.” The differentiation between the present addressee, which has come into his rest, and the Exodus generation, to which ייהוה swore that they would never come into his rest, is one of the crucial


3. Psalm 94 LXX

Before we conclude with some observations on Ps 95 within the context of Hebrews, we have to look at any major changes made to the psalm in the LXX. There is no question as to the fact that the author of Hebrews is using text from the LXX, but which text is an issue currently under discussion in LXX research. There are minor changes of the LXX major text tradition which are represented in the Göttingen Septuagint in vv. 2, 6, 8, 10: LXX connects דעון with a copula καί in v. 2, and complements the absolute דעון to יי machen erkennen in v. 10. Even though the question as to the Vorlage of Hebrews cannot be discussed here, there are some major changes of the MT in the LXX that are worth noting and discussing briefly.


1. The most striking change is that of ἐρήμων ("let us kneel") to καὶ κλούσσωμεν ("and let us weep") in v. 6. This is most probably a misreading, rather than an indication that the pre-masoretic text (Vorlage) read ἐρήμων. Thus the psalm's genre changes from a hymn in the temple in the first verses, to a part of a "penitential liturgy." With this shift from hymn to complaint the admonition of vv. 8–11 seems to be grounded in the behaviour of the community. The addressed people of Israel has sinned or done evil, and thus they come into the temple to confess and to repent. The homily starting with the σήμερον in v. 7 aims at provoking a return to God, rather than a general admonition.

2. The names of the locations Meribah and Massah, which are wordplays in Hebrew with רֶבֶד ("to test") and בָּר ("to struggle"), are changed congenially to εἰν τῷ παραπταμένῳ κατά τίνων ἡμέραν τοῦ περασόμου. Massah is translated with προσαγωγός in both Exod 17:7 and Deut 6:16; 9:22, and in the LXX there is no other instance with the Greek transliteration. The changes with Meribah are weightier. Only in the LXX is Meribah translated with Παραπταμένος ("rebellion"). In Exod 17:7, the LXX says Λοιδόρης ("reproach"), but in most other instances uses ἀντίλογος (Num 20:13; 27:14; Deut 32:51; 33:8; Ps 80:8; 105:32; except for Ezek 47:19 and 48:28, where we find Μοριμόθ Κόσμησι). The LXX complements v. 10 with δό, and thus makes the rebellion a constant. This addition strengthens the tendency, which is already present in the MT.

4. The LXX translates the two imperatives, ἦλθεν (v. 1) and ἔδει (v. 6), with the adverb δύνατε. Thus the semantic connection between "coming not into my rest" ἐκκατάπτωσιν, which is translated εἰς τὴν κατάπτωσιν μου, and the presence in the temple in vv. 1–6 is cut off. This facilitates the eschatological interpretation of the κατάπτωσις, which dominates Heb 4.

5. The psalm undergoes a very important change with the superscription Κύριος ὁ δύναμις τῶν Δαουδ. In this way Ps 94 LXX (95 MT) forms part of the general tendency of the LXX Psalter, particularly explicit in the fourth book. The fourth book, Ps 90–106 MT (89–105 LXX), has the greatest number of psalms without headings in the MT. Of the thirteen new David superscriptions in the LXX Psalter, nine are located in the fourth book. A short overview of the psalm group attests to this tendency. While we could speak of a strengthened mosaic accent in the headingless psalms following the only Mosaic Psalm (Ps 89 LXX [90 MT]), now the Davidization of the fourth book becomes dominant. Only Ps 89 LXX has preserved Moses in the superscription: Προσαγωγή τοῦ Μωσέως ἀνθρώπου τοῦ θεοῦ. The same heading as in Ps 94 LXX (95 MT), Κύριος ὁ δύναμις τῶν Δαουδ, can be found in Ps 90 LXX (91 MT) and Ps 92 LXX (93 MT). In Ps 92 LXX (93 MT) it is only the second part after an enhanced superscription which attributes the psalm to the day before the Sabbath, δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ. Within the Sabbatical-triad of Pss 91–93 LXX, Ps 92 LXX becomes an obvious reference to the creation. The psalm is attributed to the sixth day of creation and the first habitation of the land. The background of this tendency to enhance the relation to the weekcays is the phrase ἐκκατάπτωσις in Ps 92 MT, which is preserved in Ps 91 LXX ( Psalmos ὁ δύναμις, εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ σαββάτου). This attribution is continued in Ps 92 LXX (93 MT) (Εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαγωγήτου), and in Ps 93 LXX (94 MT) ( Κύριος τῶν Δαουδ, τετελεσμένος τούτων). It is essential to understand and keep in mind that the psalms preceding Ps 94 LXX (95 MT) have a Sabbath connection, one which corresponds to the creation story of Gen 1 in Ps 92. The linkage between creation and kingship is present in Ps 95 MT (94 LXX) as well, and is developed in the group of Royal Psalms as a whole.

6. Supplementing the observations of the aforementioned Davicid switch in the fourth book, Ps 95 LXX (96 MT) has a connection with David and with the Second Temple. Psalm 96 LXX (97 MT (Τὸ Δαουδ, ἔτη τὴν αὐτοῦ καθίσματος) connects the land explicitly to David and to Pss 97–98 LXX (98–99 MT), which are ascribed simply to David. Psalm 99 LXX (100 MT) has preserved this connection through the Περιήγησις offering.


48. See Hossfeld, Akzentsetzungen and further Albert Pietersma, "Exegesis and Liturgy in the Superscriptions of the Greek Psalter," in X Congress of the

49. Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 2, 446.

50. Cf. ibid., 443–44.
Psalms and Hebrews

4. Psalm 95 (94 LXX) within Hebrews

With regard to Ps 94 LXX within Hebrews, the change of superscriptions is important in two respects: the first is simply the Davidic authorship, and the second is the Sabbatical flavor of Ps 94 LXX in its LXX context. This second aspect needs further explanation, after a quick look at the mention of David in Heb 3 and 4.51

Hebrews 4:7 mentions ἐν Δαυίδ ὕψωσε— the only reflection on David in an introduction of a quotation or reference to a psalm in Hebrews. The first introduction in Heb 3:7 attributes the quotation of Ps 94:8–11 LXX to the voice of the Holy Spirit (καθὸς ἤγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἁγνὸς), developed out of 2 Sam 23:2.6 On the other hand, the author of Hebrews has recognized the Psalter as a book wherein God speaks, while on the other hand he has identified it as a book that is attributed to David. Especially Ps 94 LXX is considered to be a Psalm of David, in conformity to the LXX Psalter. If one keeps in mind that the citation of Ps 94 LXX as the words of David would be the only passage in which scripture is uttered by, or attributed to, a human speaker, it seems quite possible to understand the ἐν Δαυίδ in Heb 4:7 as “in David” and not “through David,” that is, denoting particularly or merely the book of Psalms.

The author of Hebrews uses the Psalms extensively, not only in allusions or phrase quotes. The Letter to the Hebrews has the greatest number of citations of contiguous psalm pieces. Following Karrer,7 the distribution of Old Testament quotations is significant: Pentateuch (13); Psalms (14); and Prophets (7). It can be argued that the selection of the Psalms reveals the theological preferences of the author of Hebrews.8


52. Karrer, Hebräer, 54, 60–61, 207.

53. Ibid., 62.

54. The following chart refers to the appendix in Nestle–Aland 27th ed.

| Ps 2:7 | Heb 1:5; 5:5 | Ps 95:11 | Heb 4:3, 5 |
| Ps 8:5–7 | Heb 2:6–7 | Ps 102:26–28 | Heb 1:10–12 |
| Ps 22:23 | Heb 2:12 | Ps 104:4 | Heb 1:7 |
| Ps 40:7–9 | Heb 10:5–7 | Ps 110:1 | Heb 1:13, 13; 10:12 |
| Ps 40:8–9 | Heb 10:9 | Ps 110:4 | Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21 |
| Ps 45:7–8 | Heb 1:8 | Ps 118:6 | Heb 13:6 |
| Ps 95:7–8 | Heb 3:15; 4:7 | Ps 135:14 | Heb 10:30 |

To be expected are the “messianic classics” Ps 2 and Ps 110 MT (109 LXX), and the reception of Ps 40 MT (Ps 39 LXX), as well the prominence of Ps 8.8 Apart from these, there are the traditions of the kingship of God in Ps 45 and 95, conceptions of creation from Ps 102 MT (LXX 101), and a phrase from Ps 104 MT (LXX 103). The author of Hebrews was of course familiar with the Psalter as a whole, and he uses the Psalter not only as a supplier of phrases, but also in order to develop his theology in a psalms context. He was acquainted not only with the individual psalms, but also with their contextual integration. The heaggadic pesher or (without defining a sharp contrast between pesher and midrash) midrashic exegesis of Ps 94 LXX (95 MT) hints at the context of this psalm in the LXX. In the dashing exegesis (kühne Schriftislegung)9 of ch. 4 we find the first combination of Ps 94:11 LXX (95:11 MT) with Gen 2:2. The exegetical literature correctly identifies this passage as a gezera shewa, that is, an explanation of a verse of scripture by using analogy with another verse. Following the second quotation of Ps 94:11 LXX (95:11 MT) in Heb 4:3, the text continues: κατὰ τῶν ἐργῶν ἐπὶ καταβολὴς κόσμου γεννηθέντων (“though the works were [finished] from the foundation of the world”). Taking up the ἐργα of Ps 94:9, and identifying them not with the deeds in Egypt or in the Wilderness, but with all the deeds of God, namely, the ἐργα of the creation, v. 3 leads to the


56. For discussion, see Karrer, Hebräer, 20–21.

57. Ibid., 215.

58. Günter Stemberger, Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch (8th ed.; Munich: Beck, 1992), 28–29, hints at the rhetorical parallel synecrosis pro ton. Because this rule is usually used only inside the Torah, Karrer speculates about the different position in Hebrews, which does not clearly concede priority to the Torah.
reflection on creational rest. This is a significant change compared to the first reference to Ps 94:11 LXX (95:11 MT) in Heb 3:9. Following some Greek manuscripts, the τέσσαρα χρόνα ητί is understood as an adverbial supplement to τὰ ἔργα σου ("they have seen my deeds forty years"). The Hebrew word order allows for this reading, but the presupposition is to ignore the κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν in v. 8. Thus, Heb 3 underlines the abovementioned serious alteration of Ps 95, in contrast to the Pentateuchal pretexts. The judgment "you will not come into my rest" has moved from the story to the end of the Wilderness period. Yet the author of Hebrews was aware of this transformation. He understood Ps 94:8–11 and its core background in Num 14 very well. There are two lexematical hints at Num 14:29 that strengthen this assumption: (1) the word κόλον in 3:17 is used in Num 14:29 LXX, but is a hapax in the New Testament; (2) the use of πίστις in 3:17 and 4:11 resembles Num 14:29. So, the author avoids uncoupling the oath completely from the story story and the refusal of the land, yet follows Ps 94 in transposing the oath to the end of the forty years. His paradigm is not refusal of the land, or murmuring about the lack of water in Massah and Meribah, but ἀποστασία (Heb 3:19) and πίστις (Heb 4:2 and 3).

The assumption of this line of thought is of course the uncoupling of the πέντε χρόνα from the linked stories in Exod 17 and Num 20. Now the temptation and reviling in the whole forty years moves more into the foreground. Even though the deeds of God in the Wilderness prevail in Heb 3:9, the interpretation is open to all deeds of God. This is made complete in Heb 4:3 in the κατὰ τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταρρολής κόσμου γεννηθέντων. The reference to the deeds of creation, which allow the cognition of God in his creational world, is by all means conforming to Ps 94 LXX, especially in the hymnic praise of the greatness of God in vv. 4 and 5. Yet in Ps 94 LXX there is no reference to the seventh day, which is established in the following text passage. Without giving an exact reference to the creation story, Heb 4:4 cites Gen 2:3: εἶρηκεν γάρ που περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας κατέπαυσεν ο θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἐξουσίας τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ("he says somewhere about the seventh day as follows: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all his works'").

This transformation or movement of theme from the land to the Sabbathical rest is a pivotal point for the eschatological redefining of the κατά πασιν. And yet, before explaining this crucial transformation, we have to ask: How does the shift to Gen 2 work? Of course, the genitive shewa needs a semantic hook that is next to the aforementioned reference to the ἔργα. This can be found in the use of κατά πασιν as verbal phrase in Gen 2:3 LXX, and of κατά πασιν in Ps 94:11 LXX. If God speaks, κατά πασιν can be interpreted as his Sabbathical rest on the seventh day. My proposal is that this identification is further strengthened by the abovementioned Sabbathical context of the neighbouring psalms (Ps 91–93 LXX), which are connected with the Sabbath, as well as the sixth day and the fourth day, respectively. The psalm group was interpreted within a late post-exilic Sabbath theology, and the praise of creation in Ps 94 LXX may be interpreted in the context of Sabbathical theology. Creation theology comes to its climax in the Sabbath as the aim of all creation. Thus the author of Hebrews reads the κατά πασιν in the Sabbathical context of the neighbouring psalms as reference to the creational Sabbath of God. This forces an eschatological interpretation of the κατά πασιν, which seems to be in the background of Heb 4, and the word σαββατισμός in Heb 4:9. But this eschatological shift is already present in Heb 4:1. That seems clear from the programmatic καταλειπομένης ἐπιγγέλλεις εἰσελθῶν εἰς τὴν κατά πασιν, already prepared in 3:14's μέχρι τῆς τέλους ("until the end"), which is the starting point for the interpretation of the quote from Ps 94 LXX. The rationale for this reading is the σήμερον, which is picked up from 3:7, in 4:7 and which is also present in 3:15.

This logic has another presupposition: if the Sabbathical rest of all creation is the real content of the ἐπιγγέλλεις in 4:1 (which is καταλειπομένης), then the promise is definitely still outstanding. This is, of course, the most crucial transformation, one which leads us to my final question: Is there an actual place for Israel in Heb 4? While the author of Hebrews was certainly aware that Ps 94:8–11 was spoken to the Exodus generation, and that the oath was only cited to a present generation that had come into the temple, it is not by chance that vv. 1–6 are completely absent in Heb 3–4. In the understanding of the author of Hebrews, the hymnal praise will be the eschatological praise. Thus the admonition is linked to the σήμερον (Heb 3:19) and πίστις (Heb 4:2 and 3) paradigm which is determined christologically. In order to open the promise of the eschatological κατά πασιν to his audience, the author has to detract the Joshua generation from the fulfilling of the promise. This is, of course, a violent reinterpretation, against the sense of his Pentateuchal and Psalimic pretexts. And it is this that becomes the author's inexusable hermeneutical sin, as it causes the exclusion of the present Israel from

59. For the discussion of κατά πασιν in Hebrews, see especially Khio-k-Hng, Meaning, 2–33.
60. Cf. Honsfeld and Zenger, Psalms 2, 640–42.
the line of promise. Thus, in order to achieve his intention, he runs a
table play with the text. First, the Joshua generation is implicitly cut off
in the absolute understanding of the εἰ in the oath-citation of 3:11, 18; 4:3
and 3:16 (ἄλλ' ου πάντες οἱ ἐξελθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωϋσέως).
Surely, the author of Hebrews knows all too well that there is a Joshua
generation, one that is numerically not significantly smaller than the
Exodus generation (Num 26). Nevertheless, he reduces this possibility of
κατάπαυσις in Deut 12:9 or 1 Kgs 8:56 in favour of the eschatological
interpretation. The Joshua generation and the preceding Israel is therefore
explicitly located outside the promised κατάπαυσις (4:8). The
reversal of the generation scheme is obvious in the update of 4:3,
Εἰσχρόχωμα γὰρ εἰς τίνι κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύουσιν, which contrasts
with the εἰς ειδάνουσαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν μου. The present
generation of “us”—the addressees of Hebrews—is supposed to come into his rest.
While the post-Wilderness generation has entered the land and the
temple (clear from the processional situation in Ps 94:1–7a LXX [MT
95:1–7a]), the eschatological interpretation qualifies the κατάπαυσις as
unattained. The anchor is σήμερον, assuring the update and developed further
in vv. 7 and 8. The author again excludes the Joshua generation
explicitly in v. 8, with a ventriloquious conclusion which accepts logical and
historical inconsistencies to maintain the line of argumentation. The
validity of the oath that οἱ πρότερον ἔσχεν γενοῦσιν have not entered
his rest is affirmed with ἀπεθάνουσιν. This allegation contradicts biblical
reality (because the promise is applied only to the Exodus generation and
not to the Joshua generation), but not the author’s understanding of
κατάπαυσις. Since the σήμερον of the psalm citation is spoken after
Joshua ἐν Δαυίδ by God (4:7), Joshua could not have lead the people
into God’s rest, because God would speak of a certain day after the point
in time the people had come into his rest. The argumentation is logically
regular, but rhetorically effective. The contemporaneous Israel sinks into
the deep fosse between the addressees, “us,” who hear the psalm citation
anew, and the bygone fathers, “they,” who had failed to believe. Verse 9
draws the conclusion that there remains a rest as σάββατος τοῦ ἱεροῦ.
There can be no doubt, that λαός τοῦ θεοῦ is the admonished
Christian community. While first the text takes the land from them
(Israel), now the Sabbath is taken semiologically, too. In my view, the
argumentation implies substitution in its pure form.

To sum up: because of the eschatological interpretation of the κατά-
παυσις (vv. 1, 8, 9), and the connection to the πίστις (v. 2), there is no
place for Israel. Within the time, σήμερον, there is no present or relevant
Israel who can hear the ἐν Δαυίδ as addressee. The living word (cf. 4:12)
is only ἐπαγγελία of a σάββατος (4:9) for the λαός τοῦ θεοῦ (4:9),
who are the congregation of Christ (cf. 1:1).

5. Concluding Remarks

Finally, I want to summarize the reception of Ps 94 LXX within Hebrews:
1. The author of Hebrews resumes and updates Ps 94 LXX in order
to develop his theology in a psalm context. He uses Ps 94 because it
is in line with his argumentation. The distance regarding the
Wilderness tradition; the missing localisation of the Wilderness
quarrel; and the movement from the disobedience to a general
attitude of the people of Israel fit perfectly into his concept.
2. Via the Davidization and the Sabbathization, Heb 3–4 strengthens
the tendency of the LXX. Psalm 94 is understood now as a promise
of a creation-theological and eschatological perfection.
3. The hermeneutical problem of Israel’s existence in the Promised
Land, which results from the aforementioned reinterpretation of Ps
94, is solved with a substitutional theology. In doing so, illogical
arguments (cf. Heb 4:8) will be accepted.

In the end we have to return to our hermeneutical presuppositions.
Christian interpretation of scripture has to avoid disinherence and anti-
Judaism. There is no way to distinguish a specific Christian theology by
denying the salvation of Israel, the everlasting covenant, and the mercy
of God. If our interpretation is correct, the Letter to the Hebrews
reserves no place for contemporary Israel, respectively, contemporary Jews,
in the salvation plan of God. They are discarded because they refuse.
The continuous debate surrounding anti-Judaistic sentiment in scripture
suggests the problematical, and in some ways anachronistic, use of the
term anti-Judaism; as well as the fuzzy criteria for “anti-Judaism.”

62. See, for example, William Klassen, “To the Hebrews or against the
Hebrews? Anti-Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in Separation and
and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid
Laurier University Press, 1987), 1–16; Franz Mussner, “Das innovierende Handeln
Gottes nach dem Hebräerbuch und die Frage nach dem Antijudaismus des Briefes,”
in Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition und Innovation (ed. G. Schnattermayer;
Regensburg: Friedrich Pustel, 1997), 13–24, as well as the more recent commentaries.
See also the debate surrounding the document in the Pontifical Biblical
Commission’s The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible
(Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002).
There have been ample attempts at justifying the use of scripture in Hebrews by, for example, the Pontifical Biblical Commission:

Although it never explicitly affirms the authority of the Jewish Scriptures, the Letter to the Hebrews clearly shows that it recognises this authority by repeatedly quoting texts to ground its teaching and exhortations. It contains numerous affirmations of conformity to prophetic revelation, but also affirmations of conformity that include aspects of non-conformity as well... The Letter to the Hebrews shows that the mystery of Christ fulfils the prophecies and what was prefigured in the Jewish Scriptures, but, at the same time, affirms non-conformity to the ancient institutions: the glorified Christ is at one and the same time in conformity with the words of Ps 109 (110):1, 4, and in non-conformity with the levitical priesthood (cf. Heb 7:11, 28). 63

In the range of fulfilment and prefiguration we cannot expect a serious confession of anti-Judaistic implications in the theology of the Letter to the Hebrews:

Neither does the Letter to the Hebrews mention "the Jews" or even "the Hebrews"... The author points out the deficiencies of Old Testament institutions, especially the sacrificial cult, but always basing himself on the Old Testament itself, whose value as divine revelation he always fully recognises. With regard to the Israelites of the past, the author’s appreciation is not one-sided, but corresponds faithfully to that of the Old Testament itself: that is, on the one hand, by quoting and commenting on Ps 95:7–11, he recalls the lack of faith of the generation of the Exodus, but on the other hand, he paints a magnificent fresco of examples of faith given throughout the ages by Abraham and his descendants ([Heb] 11:8–38). Speaking of Christ’s Passion, the Letter to the Hebrews makes no mention of the responsibility of the Jewish authorities, but simply says that Jesus endured strong opposition "on the part of sinners." 64

That the Letter to the Hebrews recalls the lack of faith of the Exodus generation is only one side of the coin. The implication of Israel without allotment of the rest on the one hand, and the history of reception on the other, is more precisely expressed by Martin Karrer:

Obwohl er seine Theologie seinem Verständnis nach innerjüdisch entwirft, entsteht ein Graben zu jedem Judentum, das Aaron durch die Weichenstellungen der Tora zum primären kultischen Orientierungspunkt gemacht sieht und die Tora ohne Christologie liest. Das bahnt christlichen Widersprüchen gegen das Judentum unter Vereinnahmung der Tora die Bahn. 65

Hebrews does not provide a conscious and affective anti-Judaism, but an implicit substitution, and therefore a sort of anti-Judaism, one which has to be corrected by a focus on the remaining promises of the Torah. The hermeneutically postulated canonical dialog of Heb 3 and 4 is a tough act to follow. More explicitly, F. Mussner states: "Christliche Theologie darf sich, was ihr Verhältnis zum Judentum angeht, nicht unseitig und oft mißverstehend an einer neutestamentlichen Schrift wie dem Hebräerbrief...orientieren." 66

The only possible conclusion is to discuss the implications of the theological presuppositions of the Letter to the Hebrews, and to adjust them within an inner-canonical dialogue and in the light of a recent dабру емет with respect to Jewish faithfulness to their revelation. As Karrer puts it, "Hermeneutisch ist das Gespräch, das in ihm (scil. the Letter to the Hebrews) abbricht und die Gemeinsamkeit mit Israel gegen jeden Antijudaismus zu suchen." 67

63. The Pontifical Biblical Commission, Jewish People, B.3.8.
64. Ibid., C.79.2.