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A Biblical Theological Analysis of Hebrews 3:7-14

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A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

OF

HEBREWS 3:7-15

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INTRODUCTION

When running a race, the goal is to finish well. If one is running in order to compete, the goal is to finish before anyone else, but for the average runner, finishing *well* is sufficient. However, whether one runs competitively or as an amateur, both would attest to the fact that not finishing the race would be something to avoid. For whatever reason – whether it be an injury, exhaustion, or lack of commitment – people cannot always finish the race. The author of Hebrews faces a similar situation. It appears as if there are people in his congregation who look as if they are about to quit the race. He writes them in order to warn them of the severity of quitting the race of faith, and he writes the entire church to encourage them all to persevere and endure the long race, and he instructs them on how they might help those who are in danger of quitting. Only those who complete the race of faith will win the prize of eternal rest with God in his kingdom, but those who forfeit will not ever get a glimpse of this wonderful rest that awaits those who persevere.

BACKGROUND

The anonymous author of Hebrews is likely a Hellenistic Christian with a background in Hellenistic Judaism – a background likely shared by his audience.¹ The believers being addressed in this discourse are surrounded by trials and hardships, and

1. Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1- 8*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), xlix.

the author writes these words of exhortation (cf. 13:22) to encourage them to hold fast to their confession of faith and grow into maturity.²

Prior to interpreting some of the more difficult passages contained in Hebrews, one should have a proper understanding of the audience being addressed in order to contextualize the stern warnings which the author gives to this waffling Church. The author scatters multiple warnings throughout the letter, not to cause the congregants to doubt the legitimacy of their faith nor is it to make these believers anxious about their eternal security, but rather, the author writes with pastoral concern, and he extends these warnings against falling away to *specific individuals* in the congregation who appear to be at a higher risk.³ Having been socially ostracized, oppressed, and even imprisoned because of their bold profession of faith in Christ (cf. 10:32-34), some had already apostatized and deserted the church, and those who remained were lacking in confidence, interest in the message of the gospel, and were lethargic in practice and disheartened in disposition (cf. 10:35-36).⁴ Knowing their situation⁵, the author writes to encourage the whole congregation in their continued faith (cf. 4:11), warn of the dangers of falling away since some apparently had already abandoned their ranks (cf. 6:4-6; 10:25, 29), and reinvigorate those in the congregation who seem to be flirting with apostasy (cf. 6:11-12; 12:12, 15a).

2. Brown, Raymond. *Christ Above All: The Message of Hebrews*. The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 13.

3. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, lvi.

4. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, lxi.

5. Pfitzner, Victor C. *Hebrews*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 19.

As the author makes clear in 3:7-15 – the passage examined below – it is those who believe and persevere unto the end which will enter the eternal rest which God has prepared for his people, and as he observes the congregation struggle in their journey of faith, he, in the writing of this “brief” exhortation (cf. 13:22), propels them to continue to “run with endurance the race set before” them and to look “to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of [their] faith” (12:1-2).⁶

EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS 3:7-15

CONTEXT AND VERSE 6B

The passage under consideration is linked to what precedes it by v. 6b: “We are [Jesus’] house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” Earlier in chapter 3, the author has shown the faithful service of Moses and Jesus, and he has shown that though Moses was a faithful servant, Jesus is the exemplar for faithful service to God (cf. 3:3)⁷. Jesus holds a place of more honor and authority than Moses, for Jesus “is faithful over God’s house as a son” (v. 3a). He is the founder of the house – the new covenant people of God – and he is the one who continually presides over it.

Seeing the faithful example of Moses, the leader of the people of Israel, and then seeing the exemplar of servitude and sonship in Jesus, the head of the people of God (cf.

6. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture is taken from the English Standard Version.

7. Guthrie concisely summarizes the author’s comparison between Moses and Jesus, stating, “He uses Moses as a reference point from which to highlight the greater faithfulness of Christ... Thus Jesus, as the Son of God, provides an example superior to that of even the greatest of Old Testament figures... The author builds on the greatness of Moses and asserts that as great as this religious figure might be, Jesus must be the object of a Christian’s ultimate focus.” Guthrie, George H. *Hebrews*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 132-133.

Col. 1:18), the author makes application for his audience by asking them to consider *who* is a part of Christ's house. He pronounces that "*we* are his house." Believers in Christ, who are "holy brothers and sisters" and "partners in a heavenly calling" (v. 1 NET), are members of Christ's house. But the author's application continues. Believers in Christ are a part of his house "*if* indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope." The first clause ("we are his house") is made conditional by the second clause ("if indeed we hold fast"). Holding fast with boldness and confidence is of the utmost importance for the author, and it is this verse that serves as a hinge between 3:1-6a and 3:7-4:13.⁸

The positive examples of Moses and Jesus are contrasted against the negative example of faithless Israel in their forty years wandering in the wilderness.⁹ This negative example is used to illustrate and reinforce the conditional *if* in v. 6b, and it is used in such a way as to call the audience to perseverance in faith and in order to depict the severity of falling away.

VERSES 7-11

The author makes use of Psalm 95:7-11 (Psa. 94 LXX) in his call for his audience to hold fast to their confession. Prior to quoting the psalm, the author prefaces it with the

8. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 128; Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1977), 138. The conditional nature expressed in v. 6b can be troubling for some. Hughes addresses this concern by directing the reader to Jesus' words in John 8:31, "if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine" (NASB).

9. Morris conjectures that a part of the author's interest in the generation who wandered in the wilderness for forty years is due to face that he writes to a church in the fourth decade since Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension. As the Jewish people rejected Jesus during his lifetime (cf. Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13-15), the author admonishes his audience to avoid repeating their error. Morris, Leon. "Hebrews." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Vol. 12: Hebrews-Revelation*. Frank E. Gaebelien, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 34.

citation formula “therefore, as the Holy Spirit says” (v. 7a). By putting the words of the psalmist in the mouth of the Holy Spirit, the author reveals his view of Scripture and the nature of divine inspiration. Later in his letter, he makes his position explicit when writing that “the word of God is *living* and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (4:12). As seen in v. 7a, the author of Hebrews believes that the Scriptures are the *living* words of God which are actively used by the Holy Spirit for the teaching, reproof, correcting, and training of the people of God (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16).¹⁰ It is not the psalmist who speaks nor is it the author of the letter who speaks; it is God himself who speaks.¹¹

The author of Hebrews creatively uses the psalm in a manner which is not primarily concerned with the wilderness generation but rather, his concern is with his distraught congregation. Guthrie notes that “the author uses that generation as an exemplar on how people should not respond to God and his revelation.”¹² This further supports the fact that the author believes that the words of the Scriptures are absolutely authoritative and that they are the words of God which are actively spoken directly to his audience and their current situation.

The psalm begins with a call to action and the negative example set by Israelites: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day

10. Pfitzner, *Hebrews*, 33.

11. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, cxvii.

12. Guthrie, George H. “Hebrews.” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 955.

of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years" (vv. 7b-9). The situation being alluded to in the LXX translation¹³ of the psalm (the author's preferred text) is in the rebellion of the Israelites in Num. 14 after hearing the reports of fortified cities and opposing forces in Canaan.¹⁴ Rather than responding in thanks to God for his provision of a fruitful and abundant land for his people (cf. Num. 13:26-27; 14:7) or trusting God to defeat their enemies who currently occupied Canaan (cf. Num. 13:30; 14:8-9), they grumbled against Moses (cf. Num. 14:1-2), accused God of forsaking them (cf. Num. 14:3), and sought to rebel against God's appointed leaders (cf. Num. 14:4, 10a).

The proper response to hearing God's voice is joyful submission and faithful obedience. The Israelites serve as the negative example, for when they heard God's voice and when they saw his works, they hardened their hearts and put God to the test (vv. 8-9). The first two components of this psalm in Heb. 3 are the call to a proper response to God and the negative example of the Israelites. The third component is God's judgment upon the rebellious wilderness generation.¹⁵ Because of their hardened hearts, God says that "I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They

13. The LXX differs from the MT in a number of ways, but the most significant pertaining to the text at hand is the translating of *Maribah* as "in the rebellion" and of *Massah* as "put me to the test." While Exod. 17 is the allusion in the MT, Num. 14 becomes the allusion in the LXX. Thus, the author of Hebrews reinterprets the LXX, which itself is a reinterpretation of the MT. This goes to show how the Spirit uses the Scriptures in order to serve the needs of the audience at hand, thus, creating a "new word from God." Emmrich, Martin. "Pneuma in Hebrews: Prophet and Interpreter." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 64, no. 1 (2002): 57, 59-60; Pfitzner, *Hebrews*, 75.

14. Lane, *Hebrews* 1-8, 85.

15. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 129.

shall not enter my rest'" (vv. 10-11). Just as membership in the new covenant community of faith is conditional upon persevering in faith until the end, so was membership in the old covenant community of faith.¹⁶ The Israelites started well (cf. Exod. 14:31), but that generation did not persevere until the end, and as a result, God would not allow them to enter his rest – entry into the promised land.

God is speaking this same word to the recipients of this letter, and the author uses this past example of the rebellion of the Israelites – their being barred from entering the promised land (God's promised *rest*) – as motivation for his audience to continue in faith and learn from those who came before them. These believers in Christ must persevere just as the Israelites needed to persevere.¹⁷ They must not respond to the voice of God as their ancestors before them did (cf. Jude 5).¹⁸

VERSES 12-15

The author begins more directly applying the principle of the psalm, which was spoken to his audience by the Holy Spirit, to his readers as he speaks to them in the imperative: "take care" or "see to it" (v. 12 NET). He calls for them to properly respond to the voice of God as they heed the words spoken to them by the Spirit: "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God" (v. 12). The command is framed in the negative in order to connect to the negative example of the Israelites but also to draw the audience's attention to the

16. Brown, *Christ Above All*, 83-84.

17. Gleason, Randall C. "The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7-4:11." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157, no. 627 (July 2000): 303.

18. Brown, *Christ Above All*, 84.

detrimental effects of a hardened heart. A hardened and unbelieving heart leads one to fall away from the *living* God, and as previewed in both v. 6b and in v. 11, those who fall away will not enter the rest of God – in the present, this rest is fellowship with God throughout one’s life, but in the future, this is entry into God’s eschatological rest.¹⁹

The seriousness of falling away cannot be understated here. There is no room to occupy between faith in Christ and apostasy.²⁰ The author knows that some have left the ranks of the church, and he also knows that there are certain individuals within the congregation who ought to remember the severity of falling away from the living God.²¹ He first calls them to consider the conditional nature of membership in Christ’s house (v. 6b). He then directs them to the faithlessness of the wilderness generation and calls for them to properly respond to the voice of God (vv. 7-9). He reminds them of the judgment that generation faced for their rejection of God (vv. 10-11). He now calls them to examine their own hearts (v. 12). In fact, he seems to increase the stakes for his audience. As Bruce recalls, “The judgment of the wilderness days befell the Israelites who rejected Moses. But just as Christ is greater in glory than Moses (v. 3), so the loss incurred in rejecting Christ is greater even than that incurred in rejecting Moses.”²²

19. “The readers are reminded that perseverance until the time of the actual realization of the promise and entrance into the eschatological rest prepared for the people of God is required of those who are ‘partners with Christ.’ The community is called to expectant waiting.” Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 88.

20. Ellingworth, Paul. “Hebrews.” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, eds. (Downers Grove: IL, InterVarsity Press, 2000), 342.

21. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 129.

22. Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Rev. ed. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 99.

The author's call for individual self-evaluation is reflective of the biblical witness to humankind's nature apart from God's intervention (cf. Rom. 3:10-18). Apart from God's grace, the unbelieving and evil heart is the natural heart of all people. But this is *not* the heart of the believer. The believer has a heart open to hearing the voice of God, and this is through the work of the Spirit in softening one's naturally stony and cold heart (Ezek. 36:25-27). Therefore, to fall into "an evil, unbelieving heart" is intentional. This heart is achieved only through putting one's self on that path. As Brown so simply puts it, "this is a picture not of casual drifters, but deliberate deserters."²³ It is the result of refusing to hear God's voice (3:7-8). It is the result of neglecting fellowship between believers (3:13). It is the result of forgetting how God has been faithful in the past. It is the result of not searching one's own heart for blemishes and indwelling sin (cf. Psa. 139:23-24). The author's imperative is not to scare this congregation into obedience²⁴, but rather, it is to call them to a faith characterized by vigorous commitment to hearing the voice of God and properly responding to what he says.

The fruit of a softened heart that is obedient to God is his promised rest (cf. 4:1a). The fruit of a hardened heart, however, is apostasy. The hardened heart leads one to fall away from the living God. The author of Hebrews frequently makes reference to the "living God" (9:14; 10:31; 12:22; cf. 4:12; 7:25). Those who apostatize do not fall away from old stale doctrines nor do they reject the inherited family faith. Those who abandon the faith abandon the God who is still living, still speaking, and still upholding

23. Brown, *Christ Above All*, 86.

24. Ellingworth, "Hebrews," 342.

all things (1:3).²⁵ When the Israelites rejected Moses and Aaron as their leaders (cf. Num. 14:4), they rejected the God who appointed them as their leaders. The same is with the audience of Hebrews. In rejecting God's appointed apostle, high priest, and Son (cf. 3:1, 3, 6a), they are rejecting the living God.²⁶ The author's high view of Scripture is informed by his high view of God. The God who is living and active continues to speak to his people through the Scriptures. Because he is a living God, one must be *especially* attentive to hearing and heeding his word.

Perseverance in faith entails not only individual responsibility but also corporate responsibility. The author instructs the entire community to "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end" (vv. 13-14). The community of faith is to take interest in hold one another accountable for individual members' perseverance.²⁷ Not only does one's falling away dramatically impact the individual, it impacts the whole community as well. They are "partners with Christ" (v. 14 NET), and they are all members of the house of Christ (v. 6b). As partners and as brothers and sisters, they are to spur one another *daily* (cf. 10:24-25). As they see individuals begin to waffle, they ought to inquire of that person, and they ought to pray for that person. The individual who is set on having a hardened heart ought not be led away without having been cared for by the

25. Morris, "Hebrews," 36.

26. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 100.

27. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 87.

community. Just as discipleship and obedience is a day-by-day endeavor, so should the exhortations and encouragement of the community of faith. This dynamic is emphasized by the author's reiterating of the "today" from v. 7.²⁸ This "today" also calls to mind Moses' exhortations for the Israelites to be faithful to the covenant (cf. Deut. 4:1, 2, 26; 5:3; 6:2).²⁹

In this passage, sin is viewed as being "deceitful" (v. 13). Being deceptive, sin attempts to convince someone that something is true and good when it is actually false and destructive. When one is closed off to hearing the voice of God, and when one is neglecting to meet with other believers, one is an easy target for sin's corruption. When in isolation, untruths can begin to sound true, immorality can begin to sound moral, and bad behavior can begin to sound like good behavior.³⁰ Because sin is deceitful, the community whose leader and head is Christ, whose foundation is built upon hearing and responding to the Scriptures, and whose fellowship with one another is found in Christ alone should be earnest to hold fast and be all the bolder in their faith.³¹ As Brown writes, "These believers had to be reminded not only of the superiority of Jesus and the importance of the word, but also the encouragement of the church. In

28. "For our author, the psalm's term 'today' (*sēmeron*) refers to an era of opportunity rather than to a twenty-four-hour period, as 3:13 clearly demonstrates. 'Today' then is a time for encouragement among believers to follow God's ways, forsaking the path of unbelief." Guthrie, "Hebrews," 956.

29. Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Hebrews: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 114.

30. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 101.

31. See also Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 90.

frightened isolation they might fall, but in supportive companionship they would stand.”³²

V. 14 recalls v. 6b, as both verses contain conditional statement used for the purpose of prompting these believers to faithfully follow God. They serve as book ends for this passage, and they emphasize the author’s main point: *true believers in Christ persevere until the end*.³³ Christ’s faithfulness, as shown in 3:2, 6, serves as the motivation for believers to mirror his perfect faithfulness.³⁴ As previously mentioned, these conditional statements about perseverance never serve to intimidate or cause believers to be uncertain about their eternal security. Grudem writes that “the purpose [of these warnings] is always to warn those who are thinking of falling away or have fallen away that if they do this it is a strong indication that they were never saved in the first place.”³⁵ In v. 14, the author shows that the inference of one’s faith is supported by the evidence of one’s continued faith. In other words, “if we hold our original confidence firm to the end, we have come to share in Christ.”³⁶ For those who apostatize, it seems as if the author is indicating that they never did share in Christ for sharing in Christ is contingent upon one’s perseverance in faith throughout one’s entire life. It is one’s

32. Brown, *Christ Above All*, 88.

33. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 956.

34. Pfitzner, *Hebrews*, 77.

35. Grudem, Wayne. “Perseverance of the Saints: A Case Study from the Warning Passages in Hebrews.” *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge & Grace*. Thomas R. Schreiner, Bruce A. Ware, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 176.

36. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 135.

perseverance which validates the legitimacy of one's faith (cf. Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:14; 6:11-12; 2 John 9).³⁷

Vv. 6b and 14 are often treated as mere proof texts of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints,³⁸ and though I do not deny this doctrine, the author of Hebrews was not writing for the purpose of formulating a systematic theology of perseverance. He was writing as a pastor. He was writing in order to warn of the dangers that comes with apostasy, to encourage these believers to continue boldly in faith, and to prompt them to keep one another from falling away. Rather than writing to promote an anxious faith, the author is really saying that continued faith is evidence of one's sharing in Christ (cf. 6:11; 11:1).³⁹

His pastoral heart is shown again as he reuses the words of Psa. 95: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (v. 15). While the initial quotation in vb. 7b-8a might be read as stern, the quotation in v. 15 might be read as the pastor's plea to his flock. Notice how in vv. 6b and 14 that the author includes himself by using the plural *we*. He includes himself in his exhortation as one who must persevere in faith in order to reach God's final rest. The heart of God is reflected in the author's exhortation. What is the heart of God? The compassionate and merciful heart of God is seen in that his desire is that not "any should perish, but that all should reach

37. Ortlund Jr., Raymond C. "Apostasy." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 385.

38. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 94.

Grudem defines the doctrine as follows: "All those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and also that only those who persevere until the end are truly born again." Grudem, "Perseverance of the Saints," 182.

39. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 152; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 136-137.

repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9b). As it is God's desire that all would come to repentance, so it is the author of Hebrews' desire that all would persevere in faith throughout their lives.

APPLICATION

The presence of the warning passages of Hebrews should be an indication of the tremendous applicability of this passage (as well as of the whole book) and of the primary pastoral intention behind the writing of Hebrews. Due to the considerable amount of Old Testament allusions and the challenging Greco-Roman rhetoric employed, the original intent behind the letter is often forgotten. Hebrews is not written as a theological treatise. Hebrews was written as a rich theological feast written within the context of a pastoral homily. Therefore, there are a number of primary points within the passage under consideration that the author desires its readers to take and apply to their lives.

FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE

Faithful obedience to God is of tremendous importance to the author. The author shows Moses to be a positive example of faithful obedience to God and Jesus to be the perfect example of faithful obedience. V. 6a ("Christ is faithful over God's house as a son") is written in the present tense, thus, Jesus at the present is faithful over God's house, the Church. As Moses was faithful and as Jesus was faithful and remains faithful, so are followers of Christ to be faithful servants. Unlike the Israelites, believers in Christ are to *hear* and *respond* to the voice of God, and the only right response to hearing God's voice is that of obedience. One should then consider where the voice of God is heard.

According to this passage, the Scriptures are the very words of God (v. 7a). Later in

Hebrews, the author encourages his audience to follow the example of their leaders, “who spoke to you the word of God” (13:7-8). Those who share in Christ (v. 14) have the Spirit of Christ living within them, and through communing with Christ through his Spirit, believers can discern the voice of God from the many competing voices that fill the air. The voice of God can also be heard in the exhortations of fellow believers who likewise submit themselves to the teaching of the Scriptures and the example of their leaders and most importantly, to the perfect example of Christ himself.

PERSEVERING IN FAITH

Having heard the voice of God and living in accordance with his ways, believers are to persevere in faith throughout their entire lives. Persevering in faith is more than simply subscribing to a certain set of doctrines or doing religious duties. As Packer astutely notes, “persevering in faith and penitence, not just in Christian formalism, is the path to glory.”⁴⁰ To persevere in faith is also to participate in the life of Christ alongside other believers tasked with the same task (cf. 3:6, 14).⁴¹ It is also to remain diligent and grounded during times of trial (cf. 10:32-36).

Another dynamic to perseverance is the understanding that believers need to acknowledge that they need to be empowered by God in order to persevere. This is why the author of Hebrews frequently calls his audience to “consider Jesus” (v. 1) and look to him as the exemplar and one who empowers and keeps his children (cf. 12:2; Jude 1). Perseverance is difficult, and Christ the high priest knows this difficulty (cf.

40. Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 252.

41. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 137.

4:15); therefore, believers ought to cry out to him for the strength to persevere. They also ought to take refuge in the absolute verity that they, people who are filled with the Holy Spirit, are being *preserved* for a future rest and glory (cf. Rom. 8:30; Jude 24).⁴²

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY

Believers are individually declared righteous before God through the blood of Christ and having been justified by faith (cf. Rom. 5:1), believers are brought into fellowship with one another. As a part of God's house (v. 6b), believers are to spur one another on in their perseverance, and they are to help one another withstand the deceitfulness of sin (v. 13). Believers are also to individually examine their hearts and combat sin in their lives. They ought to take the proper measures to remain in the company of other believers, and they are to exhort other believers.

CONCLUSION

Believers, in faithfully obeying the voice of God and empowered and kept by the Spirit, are to continue in faith until the end of their lives, and as shown throughout this passage, those who share in Christ are to mutually exhort one another to persevere to the glory of Christ. May believers find assurance and confidence in their Savior who equips his children with everything they might need to run with endurance until they cross the finish line.

42. Packer, *Concise Theology*, 251.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Heb. 13:20-21)

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