

PARAKALEW IN HEBREWS 3:13

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
PREFACE.....	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Need	
Purpose	
Approach	
2. THE CONTEXT OF HEBREWS 3:13	4
Overview of Hebrews	
Overview of the Warning Passages	
Overview of “Rest” in Hebrews	
Relation of Hebrews 3:13 to the Book of Hebrews	
3. WORD STUDY OF ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΩ.....	12
Usage of Παρακαλέω in Classical Greek	
Usage of Παρακαλέω in Koine Greek	
Usage of Παρακαλέω in the Septuagint	
Usage of Παρακαλέω in the New Testament	
Definition of Παρακαλέω	
Differences Between Lexicographers	
Comparison between Παρακαλέω, Παράκλησις, and Παράκλητος	

Usage of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews

Summary

4.	EXEGESIS OF HEBREWS 3:12-15	28
	Textual Variance of Παρακαλέω	
	Parallelism with Psalm 95:7-8	
	Contrast between βλέπω and Παρακαλέω	
	Difficulties in Hebrews 3:12	
	An Examination of Hebrews 3:13	
	Difficulties in Hebrews 3:14	
	Hebrews 3:15	
	Meaning of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13	
5.	SIGNIFICANCE OF ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΩ IN HEBREWS 3:13.....	45
	Significance of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 to Original Audience	
	Theological Significance of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13	
	Modern Implications of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13	
Appendix		
A	CHART OF LEXICOGRAPHERS' DEFINITIONS	49
	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

To Roland Loyd Cox[†]

Father and friend who hoped to see my graduation,
but went to be with the Lord during the writing of this thesis.

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Allan Loder allows the public to use his font, P39 for Greek uncials, without charge. In addition, Mr. Loder has taken the time to personally respond to me concerning P39, my text critical interests and his other fonts.

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PREFACE

The reader is expected to have a working knowledge of biblical languages so quotations do not have translations. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland, 27th ed. (NA²⁷), *Septuaginta*, edited by Alfred Rahlfs (LXX) and *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). Quotations of non-biblical Greek sources are in Greek, with an English translation in the footnote. These footnotes are a courtesy to those who do not regularly read Classical and non-biblical Koine Greek.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Need

Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 represents an action that was imperative for the community of first century believers. Given the gravity of the warning passages in Hebrews, this first century community was in an extremely difficult situation. Clearly understanding this imperative action and what it meant to this particular first century community is an important task for the twenty-first century community of believers. Knowing what action the author of Hebrews was commanding the first century audience, will assist the contemporary community of believers help those who might stray from the truth of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. Meaningful help for those who might stray from the truth of Christ is critical as the modern community of believers strives to be faithful to the truth in an apparently ever increasing competition of ideas and philosophies that might lure some believers from the sufficiency and superiority of Jesus.

Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 represents an imperative action that was given to a community. The action required involved people interacting with each other. The command and action was intended for the whole community. This first century audience was being incited to act as a community in an effort to help those who were struggling.

The church in the United States (US) is in desperate need of a paradigm in which the community provides meaningful and realistic help for those who struggle to be faithful to the superiority of Christ. Most churches in the US have made crises of faithlessness to Christ an individual matter. This is evident in how much the church in the US depends on counseling that is done in private. This includes counseling done by both

the pastor and staff inside the church and the professional Christian counselor working outside the church. Understanding the command in Hebrews 3:13 to the first century community and how they were expected to respond is a critical need for the twenty-first century US church. Clearly understanding what παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 meant and the action required of the first century community is mandatory for the US church so that the community, rather than select individuals, can help crises of faithlessness.¹

Purpose

The first purpose of this thesis is to carefully examine the word παρακαλέω in the context of Hebrews 3:13. Understanding how the author of Hebrews is using παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 will require critical assessment of the following: How did the author intend for παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 to be understood by the first century audience and what actions and attitudes were expected of the first century community from this command?

Once παρακαλέω is understood in the context of Hebrews 3:13, the second purpose of this thesis is to examine what this truth means and how this truth should be applied to the twenty-first century community of believers. There are areas in which the contemporary community of believers, particularly the US church, needs to change its paradigm of providing help for those who might be persuaded to abandon the truths of the superiority of Christ.

¹ More will be said about the specific implications of this in the last chapter. However, it should be clarified at this point that the truths of Hebrews 3:13 are not meant as the cure for all problems with individuals and churches. There are some problems and issues that rightfully start with private meetings apart from the community (see Matthew 18:15-16).

Approach

The approach will be four fold: one, a review of the background of Hebrews and the context of Hebrews 3:13, two, a word study on παρακαλέω, three, an exegesis of Hebrews 3:12-15, and four, a look at the significance of παρακαλέω to the original audience and to the modern community of believers.

The background to Hebrews and the context of Hebrews 3:13 will discuss issues such as: author, audience, structure and genre of Hebrews. While these four are important, God in His sovereignty has shrouded definitive answers. Other important issues to the background of Hebrews 3:13 are the warning passages in Hebrews, the concept of “rest” in Hebrews and the relation of Hebrews 3:13 to the book of Hebrews.

The word study of παρακαλέω will evaluate παρακαλέω in classical Greek, in the Septuagint, in Koine Greek, in the New Testament, and in Hebrews. In addition the word study will look at παράκλησις in Hebrews and will compare παρακαλέω, παράκλησις, and παράκλητος.

The exegesis of Hebrews 3:12-15 is the framework in which the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 will be given. While the focus of the exegesis will be on a clear definition of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 and a clear understanding of παρακαλέω in this context, other key exegetical points will be brought out. These include the contrast between βλέπω in verse 12 and παρακαλέω in verse 13, the interpretive difficulties in verses 12-14 and the parallelism with Psalm 95.

The significance of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 will examine three areas: What was expected and commanded of the original audience? What are the theological implications of the command of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13? And finally, what is Scripture expecting and commanding of the modern community of believers?

CHAPTER 2
THE CONTEXT OF HEBREWS 3:13

Overview of Hebrews

Hebrews is an elegantly written book that unmistakably presents a sophisticated argument for the superiority of the work and person of Jesus Christ. While Hebrews is clearly an argument for the superiority of Christ, there are a number of issues surrounding Hebrews that are shrouded with mystery, the foremost issues being the author and audience. Other issues in Hebrews that are clouded include genre, structure, the interpretation of warning passages, and an understanding of “rest.”

If the author and audience were obvious and if there were additional information available about the author and audience (via archaeology, other writings, or even Scripture itself), it would help tremendously in clarifying areas like structure, genre, the interpretation of the warning passages and concept of “rest.” However, God has not revealed the author and audience. Astute scholars move forward carefully so as not to overextend speculation and theories into the exegetical process. The goal of this section is to carefully and concisely discuss authorship, audience, genre and structure. By no means will this section cover all that could be said about these areas, but a general (and brief) overview will be given.

When discussing authorship it is best to remember Origen’s words concerning the author of Hebrews: “But who it was that really wrote the epistle, God only knows.”¹ It is clear that Hebrews was considered canonical because it was thought to be Pauline.

¹ Eusebius *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History* 25.14.

However, most modern scholars agree that Paul was not the author of Hebrews.² The list of possible authors includes: Aquila and Priscilla, Clement of Rome, Mark, Silas, Barnabas, Luke and Appollos. There are arguments for and against each of these as possible authors. In concluding his thesis on the authorship of Hebrews Warwick Aiken stated that a conclusion seems “incapable of proof.”³ Aiken’s final comments concerning the issue of authorship are an excellent way to end this discussion. “The reader will do well to turn from the problem of authorship and give his mind to the message of the epistle itself, for he will be far more benefited by leaving this question as one of those matters which is still seen as through a glass, darkly, and focus his attention upon the Person whom the epistle reveals, the wonderful and matchless High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴

Just as the author of Hebrews is seen through a dark glass, so is the identity of the original audience. In recent times scholars have suggested, with sound argumentation, that Rome was the location of the original audience.⁵ Older commentaries suggest that the location of the original audience was somewhere in Judea.⁶ The discovery of the Dead

² Hebrews makes no mention of the Gentile/Jewish issues, which is a common theme in Pauline literature, Hebrews is anonymous compared with all the other letters of Paul (in which he identifies himself as the author) and the vocabulary, grammar and imagery of Hebrews are not common to the other Pauline literature.

³ Warwick Aiken, “The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews” (Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1946), 86.

⁴ Ibid., 86-87.

⁵ This argument is based on οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας in Hebrews 13:24b being translated as “those who come from Italy.” Two who are representative of this view are: Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, ed. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann, 1993), 29; and William L Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W Barker, vol. 47a (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), lix-lx.

⁶ Two who are representative of this view are James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924; reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1968), xvi (page citations are to the reprint edition); and Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the*

Sea Scrolls has also brought the suggestion that Hebrews might be addressing a community with similarities to the Qumran community.⁷

As with the author of Hebrews it is best to suggest that only God knows with certainty the identity of the original audience. However, it is clear that Hebrews is addressing a specific community of people concerning some very serious issues (which are summarized in the next section).

Is the genre of Hebrews a sermon or is Hebrews an epistle or letter? Hebrews has an ending like a letter or an epistle, it would be long and complicated for a sermon and the writer uses ἐπιστέλλω in Hebrews 13:22. However, Hebrews uses the language of a sermon. The word λέγω, versus γράφω, is used throughout the book that gives Hebrews the tone of a sermon (Hebrews 2:5, 5:11, 8:1 and 11:32). The use of ἐπιστέλλω can be explained in that the sermon had to be written down at some point (whether previously preached or written as a sermon to be read). In addition, Hebrews does not have an introduction like one would expect of a letter or an epistle. Much more could be said on genre, although, it is best to view the genre of Hebrews as a sermon.

In general terms there are two methods of dividing Hebrews: a content-oriented approach and a form-oriented approach.⁸ There is tremendous variance in how scholars divide and structure the book of Hebrews. This variance even exists among scholars using the same method to outline Hebrews.⁹ One of the characteristics of

Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays (New York: Macmillan, 1903; reprint, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950), xli (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁷ See Chaim Rabin, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin (Jerusalem: Magnes Press Hebrew University, 1965), 55; and Noel Weeks, “Admonition and Error in Hebrews,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 (1976): 77.

⁸ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 50ff.

⁹ For an example of diversity in outlining Hebrews see chart in Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, lxxxix.

Hebrews that makes it very difficult to divide is the gradual transitions between topics. Moffatt suggested that Hebrews should not be divided but rather it should be followed point to point. Moffatt argued that dividing Hebrews up was “artificial.”¹⁰ While there is great debate about the structure and outline of Hebrews, there is little debate that Hebrews is a cohesive argument that smoothly flows from idea to idea.

Overview of the Warning Passages

The warning passages are some of the most difficult passages in Scripture to interpret. Given that Hebrews 3:13 is in a warning passage, a brief overview of the warning passages is warranted. The foremost question in coming to an interpretation of the warning passages is determining whether these passages are addressing believers or non-believers. If the passage is addressing believers the next question is whether the passages are addressing loss of reward, loss of salvation (i.e. apostasy), a hypothetical situation or a test of genuineness. If the intent of the passage is to address loss of reward then why does the writer use language that sounds like the language of apostasy? It seems as if the language of the warning passages is addressing apostasy not loss of reward. On the other hand, if the intent of the warning passages is to address apostasy, this has very serious implications for the doctrine of perseverance and eternal security, even if the writer of Hebrews is speaking in theoretical terms. If the writer of Hebrews is suggesting apostasy as a hypothetical possibility that does not happen, then there is a serious question as to why the writer brings up something that would never happen. Speaking of warnings in the language of a test for genuineness would mean that the warnings are addressed to both true believers (who pass) and false believers (who fail). This raises two difficult questions: one, why would the author use the same language to describe the true

¹⁰ Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, xxiii-xxiv.

people of God as those who are false. Two, given this testing throughout the believers life how can a believer ever have true assurance?

If the warning passages are addressed to non-Christians it alleviates the difficult questions above. But it also raises the question as to why the author of Hebrews would describe non-Christians in language that sounds distinctly Christian.

There are six basic views of the warning passages.¹¹ These views provide helpful categories to facilitate the discussion of these difficult passages.¹² One, the phenomenological-false believer view argues that the warnings are addressed to those who appear to be believers but are not genuine believers.¹³ Two, the phenomenological-true believer view maintains that the warnings are addressed to true believers who can and do abandon their salvation.¹⁴ Three, the hypothetical view argues that the warnings are to the true Christians, but the warnings are only hypothetical and could never happen.¹⁵ Four, loss of reward view that claims the warnings are addressed to true believers who are at risk of losing rewards.¹⁶ Five, the tests of genuineness view maintains that the warnings are to genuine believers and those who respond in obedience

¹¹ Two other views that are noteworthy: one, that a Christian can be an apostate in danger of severe judgment from God. See Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 795-96, 805. Two, the warnings are for the local covenant community so they will not turn away as whole. See Verlyn D. Verbugge, "Towards a New Interpretation of Hebrews 6:4-6," *Calvin Theological Journal* 15, no. 1 (1980), 61-73.

¹² While these categories are very helpful, it seems that the current theological language does not provide adequate categories and terms for the discussion of perseverance, assurance and the warning passages.

¹³ McKnight, "Warning Passages," 23-24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

¹⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and a Proposal," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (1998): 39-40, and McKnight, "Warning Passages," 23.

¹⁶ Schreiner, "Perseverance and Assurance," 34-36.

to such warnings are truly Christians.¹⁷ Six, the irresolvable tension view argues that there is tension between the assurance passages and the warning passages that cannot be resolved.¹⁸

Another point of interest in some warning passages is the use of *τις* and *ἡμεῖς* in close proximity to each other (Hebrews 3:6-14 and Hebrews 10:24-26). These usages will be examined more closely in chapter four.

One last observation of the warning passages is the general progression that exists in the warning passages. The pattern is: exhortation, sin, consequences and reassurance or exhortation.¹⁹ It should be noted that not all the warning passages exactly follow this pattern, including the warning in Hebrews three and four. There is no reassurance or concluding exhortation in this warning.

An entire dissertation could be written on the warning passages; however, the goal is a brief overview of the warning passages since Hebrews 3:13 is in a warning passage.²⁰ The critical issue to keep in mind for this work is that *παρακαλέω* is being used to address a serious issue within the community of believers. It appears that in the light of the warnings (however they may be interpreted) the community is being called to action for the purpose of avoiding dire consequences.

Overview of “Rest” in Hebrews

In addition to the difficulty with the warning passages, there is a difficulty understanding how the writer of Hebrews is using the concept of “rest.” Hebrews 3:13 is

¹⁷ Ibid., 36-39.

¹⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹ For a brief overview of this pattern see McKnight, “Warning Passages,” 29.

²⁰ For more on the warning passages see Stanley D Toussaint, “The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews,” *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (1982): 67-80.

sandwiched between two passages dealing with “rest” (Heb 3:7-11 and Heb 3:16-19). While the thrust of Hebrews 3:13 does not deal with “rest,” one’s understanding of this can influence how one thinks about Hebrews 3:13.

There are three options in interpreting “rest” in Hebrews.²¹ One, the author is referring to a believer’s present “rest” in Christ. Two, the author is using “rest” to refer to heaven. And three, the author is using “rest” to refer to the coming millennium.²² The key question to ask, for the purpose of this work, is what part did the community have in helping each other reach this “rest,” however it is interpreted.

Relation of Hebrews 3:13 to the Book of Hebrews

As discussed earlier, it is difficult to divide and outline Hebrews. However, this does not prevent understanding how παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 fits into the whole of Hebrews. As previously discussed, the book is an elegant argument for the superiority of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 3:13 fits into a larger section (approximately chapters three and four) that is dealing with Israel hardening their hearts in the wilderness and how the original audience was in danger of making the same mistake as Israel. Because of Israel’s mistake an entire generation failed to enter the promise-land. Likewise, the original audience stood in danger of missing God’s “rest.” Both before and after chapters three and four the author is arguing for the superiority of the person of Christ.

In the flow of Hebrews, Hebrews 3:13 is presenting an action that is required of the community to help believers understand that Christ is superior and live accordingly. This passage is giving an action that is needed to benefit the community to understand the superiority of Christ. In light of the warning passages, Hebrews 3:13 is a

²¹ Toussaint suggest the following three options with further explanation of each option. Ibid., 70-74.

²² Option three presupposes a pre-millennial or post-millennial eschatology.

clear indication that the community plays a key role in helping one another avoid disaster.

CHAPTER 3

WORD STUDY OF ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΩ

The usage of παρακαλέω is examined in Classical Greek, Koine Greek, the Septuagint and the New Testament. Various examples of usage is given, each example will have enough text so that the context in which παρακαλέω is being utilized can be seen. By no means are the following examples exhaustive. Rather, these give a feel for how παρακαλέω is used in a given time period and how it is used in the Scriptures. From this, a definition is developed and compared to other lexicographers.

Usage of Παρακαλέω in Classical Greek

The usage of παρακαλέω as invitation to come and be present in classical Greek is clearly seen in Herodotus, “παραεκαλεε ὦν ἐς τόν πόλεμον, θέλων εἰδέναι εἴτε συμπέμψουσι εἴτε καὶ ἀπερέουσι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμφανέος τήν Ἑλλήνων συμμαχίην.”¹ This classifies as a calling or summoning.

In Classical Greek and within this classification of calling or summoning, παρακαλέω can be nuanced to mean calling someone to a trial. Lysias gives a good example, “Ἰππόνικος δὲ πολλοὺς παρακαλέσας ἐξέπεμψε τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖκα, φάσκων τοῦτον οὐχ ὡς ἀδελφὸν αὐτῆς ἀλλ’ ὡς ἄνδρα ἐκείνης εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἰσιέναι τὴν αὐτοῦ.”²

¹ Herodotus *Book 7* 7.205, “He summoned them to war, because he desired to know whether they would send their men with him or plainly refuse the Greek alliance.” Translation by A. D. Godley. vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 521.

² Lysias *Against Alcibiades* 14.28, “Hipponicus assembled a number of witnesses and put away his wife, stating that this man had been entering his house, not as her brother, but as her husband.” Translation by W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 353.

Another nuance within the classification of calling or summoning is an invitation. An invitation is nuanced in that the invitee is not obligated to come and many times it is an honor for the invitee to receive the invitation. The following is great example from Xenophon: “ὅπου μὲν στραρηγὸς σώος εἶη τὸν στραρηγὸν παρεκάλουν.”³ The classification of this is a calling or summoning but it is nuanced as an invitation.

There can also be an invitation for someone to come and be present because the inviter needs aid. Plato’s *Phaedo* gives an example of this “Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἕφη, τὸν Ἰόλεων παρακάλει, ἕως ἔτι φῶς ἐστίν. Παρακαλῶ τοίνυν, ἕφην.”⁴ This is also classified under calling or summoning but is nuanced with an appeal for aid.

Παρακαλέω is used in Classical Greek to exhort or strongly encourage people toward a desired outcome. A helpful example comes from Isocrates “Ἠγοῦμαι δ’ οὕτως ἂν μάλιστα παρακαλέσαι καὶ προτρέψαι πρὸς τὸ μνημονεύειν ὑμᾶς τὰ ῥηθέντα.”⁵ Demosthenes gives a second example, “παρακαλεῖν δέ αὐτοῦς μηδέν καταπλαγέντας τὸν Φίλιππον ἀντέχεσθαι τῆς ἑαυτῶν.”⁶ These are classified as strongly encouraging or exhorting.

There is an interesting, and rare, use of παρακαλέω that has a strong element of emotion. Euripides expresses this interesting use well, “τί χρῆμα δρᾶσαι; παρακαλεῖς

³ Xenophon *Anabasis* 3.1.32, “Wherever a general was left alive, they would invite him to join them.” Translation by Carleton L. Brownson. vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 431.

⁴ Plato *Phaedo* 89c, “‘Well,’ said he, ‘call me to help you, as your Iolaus, while there is still light.’ ‘I call you to help, then’ said I.” Translation by Harold North Fowler. vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 309.

⁵ Isocrates *Nicocles of the Cyprians* 3.12, “And I believe that I should most effectively exhort you and urge you to remember my words.” Translation by George Norlin. vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 83.

⁶ Demosthenes *De Corona* 18.185, “and exhort them not to be dismayed at Philip but to hold fast to their own liberty” Translated by C.A. Vince and J.H. Vince. vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 143.

γὰρ εἰς φόβον.”⁷ Another unusual, and uncommon, use for παρακαλέω is to express a demand or requirement. The Classical Greek work of *Oeconomicus* by Xenophon has a quotation that conveys this. “ὁ μὲν γὰρ θάλαμος ἐν ὄχυρῳ ὧν τὰ πλείστου ἄξια καὶ στρώματα καὶ σκεύη παρεκάλει.”⁸ These two rare uses are mentioned to demonstrate the wide range of meaning that παρακαλέω can have.

Usage of Παρακαλέω in Koine Greek

The use of παρακαλέω in Koine Greek as an invitation to come beside and be present is demonstrated in this passage from Josephus: “καὶ δὴ ἀναβῆναι ἐπὶ τὸ ὄχημα παρεκάλεσε.”⁹ In this case the invitee is honored by the invitation. This classifies as an invitation within the broader category of summoning or calling.

The following passage from Plutarchus demonstrates παρακαλέω being used to express comfort: “προσαγόμενος δὲ τὸν ἀδελφιδοῦν Κοκκήϊον, ἔτι μειράκιον ὄντα, θαρρεῖν παρεκάλει καὶ μὴ δεδιέναι Οὐϊτέλλιον”¹⁰ Notice the emotional content indicating that comfort was needed. This is classified as to comfort or console.

A striking example of παρακαλέω in Koine Greek being used to entreat or beseech something is in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, “ἐπωτῶ δέ σε καὶ παρακαλ[ῶ γρά]ψει

⁷ Euripides *Orestes* 1583, “Thou hadst done--what? Thou thrillst me with fear!” Translation by Arthur S. Way. vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), 265.

⁸ Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 9.3, “Thus the store-room by the security of its position called for the most valuable blankets and utensils.” Translation by E. C. Marchant. vol. 4, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 439.

⁹ Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 7.172, “and even invited him to come up into his chariot.” Translation by Ralph Marcus. vol. 7, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 91.

¹⁰ Plutarchus *Plutarch's Lives* 16.2, “Then he sent for his nephew Cocceius, who was still a youth, and bade him be of good cheer and not fear Vitellius.” Translation by Bernadotte Perrin. vol. 11, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 313.

μοι ἀντιφώνησιν περὶ τῶν γενομένων]” (brackets in original indicating a lacuna).¹¹ A second example comes from Arrianus, notice in this example the request is coming from an inferior to a superior, “καὶ μετ’ οὐ πολὺ τῶν ἀπορων αὐτὸν ἐς Ῥώμην ἐπανελθόντα περὶ γῆς παρακαλούντων.”¹² Both of these classify as to entreat or request.

An example of παρακαλέω meaning an entreat or a request from a mortal to the gods in Koine Greek is in Arrian’s Discourses of Epictetus, “οὐδεὶς ἀνάγεται μὴ θύσας τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ παρακαλέσας αὐτοὺς βοηθοὺς.”¹³ A similar example from a mortal to God is from Josephus, “καὶ παρακαλεῖ τὸν θεὸν ὑπερσχεῖν αὐτῶν τὴν δεξιὰν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Παλαιστίνους μάχῃ.”¹⁴

Usage of Παρακαλέω in the Septuagint

Before looking at the specifics of παρακαλέω in the Septuagint an overarching comment about παρακαλέω in the Septuagint is warranted. In the parts of the Septuagint that are translated from the Tanakh, παρακαλέω has a limited range of meaning. This is due to the translators using παρακαλέω to primarily translate פָּקַד. In the parts of the Septuagint that are not translated from the Tanakh παρακαλέω is used with a wide range of meanings.

¹¹ *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part 2* 294.29-30, “I beg and entreat you to write me a reply concerning what has happened.” Translation by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (Oxford: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1899) 295.

¹² Arrianus *The Punic Wars* 136, “Returning to Rome not long after, and the poor asking him for land.” Translation by Horace White. vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), 645.

¹³ Epictetus *The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual and Fragments* 3.21.12, “No man sails out of a harbour without first sacrificing to the gods and invoking their aid.” Translation by W. A. Oldfather. vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 127.

¹⁴ Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 6.25, “and besought God to extend His right hand over them in the battle with the Philistines.” Translation by H. ST. J. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus. vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 179.

Παρακαλέω is used 139 times in the Septuagint. Of those 139 uses, 87 occur in the portions of the Septuagint that are translated from the Tanakh. $\square\pi\lambda$ is translated as παρακαλέω 60 times. $\lambda\pi\lambda$ is translated as παρακαλέω four times. The 13 other words that are translated as παρακαλέω in the Tanakh are only translated as παρακαλέω once or twice. $\square\pi\lambda$ will be examined briefly. $\lambda\pi\lambda$ and the other Hebrew words do not represent enough usage being translated as παρακαλέω to warrant further examination for the purpose of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13.

Brown, Driver and Briggs (BDB) define $\square\pi\lambda$ as: one, to “be sorry, moved to pity” or to “have compassion.” Two, to “be sorry, rue, suffer grief” or “repent.” Three, to “comfort oneself” or “be comforted.” Four, to “be relieved” or “ease oneself, by taking vengeance.”¹⁵

As Schmitz in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)* points out the overwhelming sense in which $\square\pi\lambda$ is translated as παρακαλέω is in the sense of comfort.¹⁶ A great example of $\square\pi\lambda$ being translated as παρακαλέω is in Isaiah 40:1 “παρακαλεῖτε παρακαλεῖτε τὸν λαὸν μου λέγει ὁ θεός.” Another wonderful example is in Genesis 37:35 where Jacob is led to believe that Joseph is dead: “συνήχθησαν δὲ πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες καὶ ἦλθον παρακαλέσαι αὐτόν καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακαλεῖσθαι.”

There are a few cases where παρακαλέω is used for $\square\pi\lambda$ to have a sense of repent or sorrow. 1 Samuel 15:11 is an example of this: “παρακέκλημαι ὅτι ἐβασίλευσα

¹⁵ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 636-37.

¹⁶ Otto Schmitz, “Παρακαλέω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and G. W. Bromiley, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 5:777.

τὸν Σαουλ εἰς βασιλέα.” These cases are clearly the exception to the rule. Further this sense is only found in the Septuagint.¹⁷

In the Septuagint that is not translated from the Tanakh, παρακαλέω has a very broad range of usage. A few brief examples will be cited to demonstrate the range of meaning and nuance for παρακαλέω in the Septuagint not translated from the Tanakh.

In 2 Maccabees 12:3 παρακαλέω is used as an invitation with the sense of to come and be present: “παρακαλέσαντες τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς οἰκοῦντας Ἰουδαίους ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὰ παρακατασταθέντα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν σκάφη σὺν γυναιξίν καὶ τέκνοις.” This usage classifies as calling or summoning.

In 1 Maccabees 12:50 παρακαλέω is used to encourage the desired outcome of being ready for battle, “παρεκάλεσαν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἐπορεύοντο συνεστραμμένοι ἔτοιμοι εἰς πόλεμον.” This is classified as strong encouragement or to exhort.

Sirach 48:24 gives an example of παρακαλέω being used to comfort or console those who are mourning, “παρεκάλεσεν τοὺς πενθοῦντας ἐν Σιων.” Because of the emotion involved and the sense of helping deal with that emotion this is classified as to comfort or console.

A final example is 1 Maccabees 9:35 where παρακαλέω is being used to make a request, “παρεκάλεσεν τοὺς Ναβαταίους φίλους αὐτοῦ τοῦ παραθέσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀποσκευὴν.” This classifies as to entreat or beseech.

¹⁷ Georg Braumann, “Παρακαλέω,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:569.

Usage of Παρακαλέω in the New Testament

Παρακαλέω is used 109 times in the New Testament and it has a broad range of meanings and nuances. A few brief examples are given and when possible additional references are cited.

An example of παρακαλέω being used as an invitation to come and be present is: “διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν παρεκάλεσα ὑμᾶς ἰδεῖν καὶ προσλαλήσαι” (Acts 28:20). A similar example is seen in Acts 8:31 “παρεκάλεσέν τε τὸν Φίλιππον ἀναβάντα καθίσαι σὺν αὐτῷ.”¹⁸ These two verses classify as calling or summoning. An invitation to come, be present and offer aid is demonstrated by Matthew 26:53, “ἢ δοκεῖς ὅτι οὐ δύναμαι παρακαλέσαι τὸν πατέρα μου, καὶ παραστήσει μοι ἄρτι πλείω δώδεκα λεγιῶνας ἀγγέλων.” This is classified as calling or summoning with an appeal for aid.

In 2 Corinthian 2:8 “διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην,” Paul has a desired action in mind for the Corinthians. Other similar examples are Romans 12:1 and 1 Peter 2:11. These examples are classified as strongly encourage and to exhort.

An instance where παρακαλέω is clearly used to mean comfort or console in the midst of a hard situation is 2 Corinthian 1:4, “ὁ παρακαλῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ θλίψει διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως ἧς παρακαλούμεθα αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.” This meaning is also seen in Matthew 5:4 and 1 Thessalonians 4:18. These verses classify as comfort or console.

Matthew 8:5 is an example of παρακαλέω being used to make a request, notice the request is from a subordinate to a superior, “Εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν.” Philemon 10 is

¹⁸ It would be possible to classify this as an invitation in the broader category of calling and summoning. Especially considering the example from Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 7.172 that was cited in the section on Koine Greek.

another request, although it is not being made from a subordinate to a superior.¹⁹ These two classify as to entreat or beseech.

The above examples demonstrate that with in the New Testament παρακαλέω can have an array of meanings and nuances.

Definition of Παρακαλέω

As demonstrated in the examination in Classical Greek, Koine Greek, the Septuagint and the New Testament, παρακαλέω has a broad range of meanings and nuances. With this wide breadth of meaning, the context in which it was used is critical for understanding which meaning the author intended. Also, with this expansive sense is the ability for authors to put the word to use in creative senses and nuances.

There are four basic meanings for παρακαλέω. They come from the various classifications of παρακαλέω in Classical Greek, Koine Greek, the Septuagint and the New Testament. In the classification of calling or summoning there is a verbal summoning for invitee(s) where the invitee(s) are expected to arrive at the side of the inviter. The first meaning of παρακαλέω is a verbal summons to come and be present. This is referred to as calling or summoning. This can be nuanced two different ways: one is an invitation where the invitee is not obligated to come and many times it is an honor for the invitee to receive the invitation. Two, is an invitation to come and provide aid.

In looking at the examples that are classified as strongly encourage or to exhort, those doing the strong encouragement and exhortation are using motivating language and generally have a particular result in mind. The second meaning of

¹⁹ Paul is the superior making a request of a subordinate. However, Paul is making the request as a brother in Christ rather than under apostolic authority. Hence the request is peer-to-peer rather than superior to inferior.

παρακαλέω is motivating words that generally have a desired outcome. This is referred to as strong encouragement or to exhort.

The third set of classifications is composed of cases where there is some emotional element (like mourning and fearful from some of the examples) or a difficult situation and consolation is being given. The third meaning of παρακαλέω is reassuring and soothing those who are emotional or in grueling circumstances. This is referred to as comforting and consoling.

The fourth, and last, examples are classified as entreat or request. This differs from the calling or summoning definition that is nuanced as an invitation to come and provide aid in the fact that going and being present is not requested. The fourth meaning of παρακαλέω is an appeal, without the request of presence. This is referred to as entreating or beseeching.

To summarize, the four basic meanings for παρακαλέω are: one, παρακαλέω can mean calling or summoning. This sense of calling or summoning can be nuanced in two ways: a) to invite someone or b) to appeal for aid. Two, παρακαλέω can mean to strongly encourage or to exhort. Three, the meaning of παρακαλέω can be to comfort or console. Four, παρακαλέω can mean to entreat or beseech.

These four basic meanings form a base definition and are used to discuss the differences between lexicographers. These definitions help facilitate the discussion between the lexicographers by being a reference point from which to measure. For the sake of semantics and clarity as to which definition or nuance is being discussed, the meanings in the base definition will be referred to as base meanings and the nuances in the base definition will be referred to as base nuances.

Different Greek lexicographers, who work with Classical and Koine Greek, have given παρακαλέω different meanings and nuances. Four lexicons that deal with Classical and/or Koine Greek will be examined and charted. The lexicographers that are

examined and charted are: Liddell, Scott and Jones in their work *A Greek-English Lexicon* (LSJ),²⁰ Bauer in his work *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG),²¹ Braumann in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT)²² and Lampe in his work *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (PGL).²³ The fifth lexicographer that will be examined is Schmitz in *TDNT*.²⁴ The chart in Appendix A displays the base definition and shows the overlap and omission of LSJ, BDAG, *NIDNTT* and *PGL*.

A discussion of the English word encourage and its semantics is warranted to prevent confusion in the definition of παρακαλέω. The English word encourage can mean: one, to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope. Two, to spur on or stimulate. Three, to give help, patronage to or foster.²⁵ The first meaning of encourage, to inspire, would correspond to the third base meaning for παρακαλέω (comfort or console). Also, the third meaning for encourage, to give help, would be similar, but not equative, to the meaning of comfort or console. (The third meaning for encourage, to give help, does not neatly fit into any of the meanings or nuances of παρακαλέω.) The second meaning of encourage, to spur on, would be analogous to the second meaning for παρακαλέω (strongly

²⁰ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones (New York: Oxford, 1996), 1311.

²¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 764-65.

²² Braumann, “Παρακαλέω,” 1:570-71. Braumann has sections on παρακαλέω in Classical Greek and the Old Testament, however, only Braumann’s section on the NT is evaluated and compared.

²³ G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 1017. The decision to include *PGL* is discussed in the section on the Differences Between Lexicographers.

²⁴ Schmitz, “Παρακαλέω,” 5:773-79, 793-99. Schmitz being omitted from the chart in Appendix A is a reflection of space limitations within the chart and the nature of *TDNT* to be verbose.

²⁵ *Webster's* 9th ed., 410.

encourage of exhort). The wording “strongly encourage” is to denote the use of the second English definition for the word encourage (to spur on or stimulate).²⁶

Differences Between Lexicographers

In addition to the four base meanings and nuances, LSJ has two additional meanings. One, παρακαλέω can also mean to demand or require. Two, it can mean to relent. LSJ also adds two additional nuances for παρακαλέω under the meaning calling or summoning. The additional nuances for summoning or calling are: one, summon a friend to one’s side during a trial. Two, summon a defendant into court. Another difference between LSJ and the base definition is that comfort or console is given as a nuance of exhort and encourage rather than as its own definition. A minor, but interesting, difference between LSJ and the base definition is that LSJ under the meaning of exhort or encourage adds the nuance excite.²⁷

BDAG follows the four basic meanings and nuances with one exception. BDAG will suggest that παρακαλέω can also mean to treat in an inviting or congenial manner. The examples that BDAG sites for this meaning can fit within other base meanings or nuances.²⁸

Braumann in *NIDNTT* proposes three meanings for παρακαλέω. The first meaning proposed is a sense of summon or ask. Under this meaning, *NIDNTT* does acknowledge, albeit very tersely, it can be nuanced in the senses of inviting or imploring, however, *NIDNTT* does not explore the nuance of an appeal for aid. Braumann is concise in exploring the nuances that can exist within his meaning of a sense of summon or ask.

²⁶ To reduce confusion, this paper uses the word encourage to mean to spur on or stimulate.

²⁷ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1311.

²⁸ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 764-65.

The other two meanings proposed, exhortation and comfort, align with the two corresponding base meanings in the base definition.²⁹

PGL was consulted to see if the meaning of παρακαλέω had changed in Patristic literature. As it turns out *PGL* also closely follows the base definition of παρακαλέω, though there are some differences. The base nuance of calling or summoning with an appeal for aid is treated as a meaning in *PGL*. The base nuance of calling or summoning with the sense to invite someone is omitted in *PGL*.³⁰

Schmitz in *TDNT* writes two different sections where παρακαλέω is defined. In the “Common Greek Usage” section, *TDNT* will follow the base definition for παρακαλέω, including appropriate discussion of how παρακαλέω can be nuanced within the meaning of to call.³¹ In the second section, “Παρακαλέω and Παράκλησις in the NT” where παρακαλέω is defined Schmitz has four meanings. The first meaning given by Schmitz is asking for help, which he concisely nuances with the sense of beseeching.³² Schmitz does not explore the nuances of a summon or an invitation. The same critique of Braumann being too concise would also have to be given to Schmitz. The next two meanings by *TDNT*, exhortation and consoling help, align with the respective meanings in the base definition. The fourth meaning that Schmitz advocates is comforting by men as an act of God.³³ This meaning is mainly derived from παράκλησις.

²⁹ Braumann, “Παρακαλέω,” 1:570-71.

³⁰ Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1017.

³¹ Schmitz, “Παρακαλέω,” 5:773-79.

³² The language “concisely” is relative to the verbosity of *TDNT* and the amount of verbiage Schmitz uses in discussing his other meanings.

³³ Schmitz, “Παρακαλέω,” 5:793-99.

Comparison between Παρακαλέω, Παράκλησις, and Παράκλητος

Παράκλησις is the noun cognate of παρακαλέω. Being a noun cognate, the definition of παράκλησις from BDAG closely follows the base meaning of παρακαλέω. παράκλησις is defined as: one, the “act of emboldening another in belief or course of action” (encouragement or exhortation). Two, “strong request or appeal.” Three, “lifting of another’s spirits” (comfort or consolation).³⁴ LSJ’s definition will closely follow BDAG, except LSJ adds the meaning calling to one’s aid or summons with a few extra nuances.³⁵

It seems that παράκλητος has the greatest recognition among Christians per New Testament occurrences. For a Greek word that is only used by one New Testament author and only has five usages in the New Testament, παράκλητος appears to be known by many believers. In contrast, παρακαλέω, is used in all but five books of the New Testament and has 109 New Testament usages, but it only seems to be recognized by those who have studied Greek.³⁶ Great care is needed in the handling of παράκλητος to ensure its meaning is not superimposed on παρακαλέω by sheer popularity.

In the New Testament παράκλητος is a clear referent to the Holy Spirit in the writings of John. In Greek usage outside of the New Testament it means called to one’s aid or summoned, especially in a court of law.³⁷

³⁴ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 766.

³⁵ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1313.

³⁶ These statements have not been scientifically researched. However the author’s experience has been that the majority of people who inquire about this thesis topic first think it has to do with the Holy Spirit because of how common παράκλητος is in Christendom.

³⁷ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1313.

Usage of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews

Παρακαλέω is used four times in the book of Hebrews. The first use is in Hebrews 3:13, which will be exegeted in the following chapter. The next usage is Hebrews 10:25, “μη ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς ἔθος τισίν, ἀλλὰ παρακαλοῦντες, καὶ τοσοῦτω μᾶλλον ὅσω βλέπετε ἐγγίζουσιν τὴν ἡμέραν.” Hebrews 10:25 is very similar to Hebrews 3:13. Both verses are in warning passages, make use of τις, are clearly directed to the book’s audience (one another), and have sin as part of the context.³⁸ Given all of these similarities, it seems that the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 should be consistent with the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 10:25.

Hebrews 13:19 is the third usage of παρακαλέω, “περισσότερος δὲ παρακαλῶ τοῦτο [προσεύχεσθε from verse 18] ποιῆσαι, ἵνα τάχιον ἀποκατασταθῶ ὑμῖν.” Here the author of Hebrews desires prayer so that the author might soon be reunited with the audience. Παρακαλέω in this verse can mean either: one, strongly encourage or to exhort or, two, entreat or beseeching.

The fourth passage that uses παρακαλέω is Hebrews 13:22 “Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν.” It is possible that the author of Hebrews is intending for παρακαλέω in this verse to mean strongly encourage or exhort.³⁹ It is also feasible that the author is intending

³⁸ Sin is mentioned directly in 3:13. In 10:25 sin is mentioned in the following verse. There is a paragraph marker between 10:25 and 10:26. However, that does not mean that 10:25 is divorced from the concept of sin. The γάρ in 10:26 has to be either explanatory or causal and either way it makes a link between sin and verse 10:25.

³⁹ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 732.

παρακαλέω to mean beseech or entreat.⁴⁰ As with the use in Hebrews 13:19, clearly defining these usages requires validation beyond the scope of this work.

Another important aspect of Hebrews 13:22 is the usage of παράκλησις in describing the book of Hebrews. The writer is defining what type of work the book of Hebrews is with παράκλησις. Though not necessary, it would seem that the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 also needs to be consistent with the meaning of παράκλησις in Hebrews 13:22.

Before moving to an exegesis of Hebrews 3:12-15, two other verses in Hebrews should be mentioned. Hebrews 6:18 and 12:5 are the other two uses of παράκλησις in Hebrews. The sense that it is used in 6:18 is either exhortation or comfort, however, it is debatable as to which sense is being used. In 12:5 παράκλησις is used in the sense of exhortation.

Summary

Παρακαλέω was examined in Classical Greek sources, Koine Greek sources, the Septuagint and the New Testament. From this examination a definition was developed for παρακαλέω, this was called the base definition. This base definition for παρακαλέω was carefully compared to other lexicons. The chart in appendix A shows the various comparisons. This work demonstrated that the meaning developed for παρακαλέω is an accurate, complete and acceptable.

The base meaning for παρακαλέω is: one, παρακαλέω can mean calling or summoning. This sense of calling or summoning can be nuanced in two ways: a) to invite someone or b) to appeal for aid. Two, παρακαλέω can mean to strongly encourage or

⁴⁰ Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, vol. 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 580.

exhort. Three, the meaning of παρακαλέω can be to comfort or console. Four, παρακαλέω can mean to entreat or beseech. This meaning was used to discuss the differences between lexicographers. It is also important to remember the discussion on the semantics of the English word encourage and that the language “strongly encourage” in the base definition represents to spur or stimulate.

Two other words παράκλησις and παράκλητος were discussed. Παράκλησις was shown to be the noun cognate of παρακαλέω. Παράκλητος was examined as related to John’s writings referring to the Holy Spirit and its other usages in non-biblical Greek. A warning was given concerning παράκλητος. Given its popularity, care must be taken to ensure its meaning is not imposed on the meaning of παρακαλέω.

CHAPTER 4

EXEGESIS OF HEBREWS 3:12-15

The focus of this exegesis will be on a definition of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 and an understanding of παρακαλέω in light of Hebrews 3:13. While other key exegetical points will be highlighted the goal is the definition and understanding of παρακαλέω in this passage, not a thorough exegesis defining every meaning in some difficult passages.

Textual Variance of Παρακαλέω

Given the importance of correctly understanding παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13, it is important to examine the textual variant in Hebrews 3:13 involving παρακαλέω. \mathfrak{P}^{13} reads παρακαλέσατε instead of the other texts that read παρακαλεῖτε. \mathfrak{P}^{13} is an Alexandrian manuscript that dates to the third or fourth century. This variant would make παρακαλέω an aorist active rather than a present active.

A third or fourth century Alexandrian text, like \mathfrak{P}^{13} , is a very strong piece of external evidence. However, some of the manuscripts that attest the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland, 27th ed (NA²⁷) reading are \mathfrak{P}^{46} (200 A.D.), codex Sinaiticus (\aleph , IV A.D.) and codex Vaticanus (B, V A.D.). \mathfrak{P}^{46} \aleph and B are all Alexandrian manuscripts. The agreement between \mathfrak{P}^{46} \aleph and B along with no other manuscripts having the variant found in \mathfrak{P}^{13} provides superior external evidence for the reading of NA²⁷.

When considering the possibility of a transcriptional error, the similarity between ε (Ε) and σ (C) in uncial characters needs to be considered. Παρακαλεῖτε and παρακαλέσατε are compared in modern and uncial characters:

παρακαλεῖτε
παρακαλέσατε

ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙΤΕ
ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΣΑΤΕ

While the words are more similar in uncial characters, a transcriptional error is doubtful. The scribe would have to have added an additional letter and confused ι (ι) and α (α), which are visually distinct in uncial characters.

It is possible to see the original being παρακαλέσατε and the aorist emphasizing the prepositional phrase “καθ’ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν” and that the command is to be done on an ongoing basis. An example of an aorist active imperative being used in this fashion is Matthew 6:11, “τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον.” Also notice that σήμερον is common to both of these verses. However, there are a couple of arguments against this, given that βλέπω (of verse 12) is a present active it seems likely that παρακαλέω would be a present active, which fits the context and flow of the verses. In addition παρακαλεῖτε and καλεῖται are a wonderful play on words, both visually and aurally. The reading of παρακαλέσατε would reduce the aural and visual aspect of this play on words. Given the textual evidence, what seems most likely is that the scribe transcribing \mathfrak{P}^{13} wanted to emphasize the ongoing aspect of the command. Both the external and internal evidence point to παρακαλεῖτε as being the original reading.¹

Parallelism with Psalm 95:7-8

Psalm 95 is a hymn of praise with a potent reminder of the consequences for not listening to the voice of God. Psalm 95 reminds the hearer of Israel’s disobedience in not entering the promise land the first time God commanded their entrance. Psalm 95:7-8

¹ Many of the commentaries referenced did not address this textual issue. None of the commentaries referenced suggested the \mathfrak{P}^{13} text. The following advocated the NA²⁷ reading: Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, ed. Helmut Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 113; and Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, ed. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 223.

is used extensively in the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews is using Israel's disobedience and consequent failure to enter the promise land as a means of warning the readers. The author's use of Psalms 95 is homiletical midrash.

The quotations of Psalm 95 in Hebrews clearly came from the Septuagint. Psalm 95:8 in the Masoretic Text has the names Massah and Meribah, while the Septuagint translates these two places as παραπικρασμῶ and πειρασμοῦ. Psalm 95:7b is an important quotation in Hebrews where the Masoretic Text differs from the Septuagint. Psalm 95:7b in the Masoretic Text reads: וְתִשְׁמְעוּ אִלְיָהּ בְּקוֹלִי אֲנִי. The Septuagint translates the phrase “ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε.” Attridge notes the Masoretic Text should be seen as a wish and translated “if only you would hear his voice.”² The New Jewish Publication Society translation reflects this in its rendering of Psalms 95:7b: “O, if you would but heed His charge.”³ The Septuagint translation is a third class condition that does not convey the sense of wish in the Masoretic Text.

Psalms 95:7b-8a is quoted three times in Hebrews: 3:7b-8a, 3:15 and 4:7b. These three quotes make “σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ” an important phrase to examine. This phrase is a third class condition (ἐὰν plus the subjunctive ἀκούσητε). It is warning people that if they hear God they should not harden their hearts. It then gives an example of how the first generation out of Egypt hardened their hearts and missed God's promised “rest.” As mentioned above παραπικρασμῶ in the Septuagint is replacing Massah from the Masoretic Text. The author of the Septuagint, and the author of Hebrews by quoting the Septuagint, is interpreting the events that took place at Massah as rebellion and that אֲנִי, from the Masoretic Text, is a condition rather than a wish. This phrase also has some key

² Attridge, *Hebrews*, 115.

³ *JPS Hebrew-English TANAKH*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003).

words found in Hebrews 3:12-15: καρδία, σήμερον and σκληρύνητε. It should also be noted that Psalm 95:7b-11 is quoted in Hebrews 3:7b-11.

The quotation from Psalm 95 along with words, phrases and ideas from the Psalm are used throughout Hebrews three and four in drawing a parallel from the situation with Israel to the situation of the original audience.

Contrast between Βλέπω and Παρακαλέω

The mood of the inflected form παρακαλεῖτε in Hebrews 3:13 and the mood of the inflected form βλέπετε in verse 12 can be either indicative or imperative. βλέπω and παρακαλέω are in a parallel construction so it follows that they both have the same mood. Given the serious subject that the writer is discussing and that failure has dire consequences the indicative form is not appropriate to the tone of the passage. The inflected forms παρακαλεῖτε and βλέπετε must be viewed as imperatives.

As mentioned above βλέπω and παρακαλέω are in a parallel construction. “Βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί, μήποτε ἔσται ἔν τινι ὑμῶν καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας,” forms the negative aspect of warning and “παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς καθ’ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν” forms the positive aspect.⁴ Ἄλλά marks the contrast between these two verses.

The imperative form of βλέπω is commonly used in the New Testament to introduce warnings (examples are Matthew 24:4, 1 Corinthians 10:12, and Ephesians 5:15). Here in verse 12 βλέπω is being used to introduce a warning that will be dealt with in the next section. The term ἀδελφοί seems to be referring to Christians. This is clarified by the author’s use of “ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι” in 3:1.⁵

⁴ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 116; and Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 223.

⁵ Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, vol. 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 242; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Barker, vol. 47a (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 74; and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 106.

Difficulties in Hebrews 3:12

The warning in verse 12, although stern, has some difficulties in interpreting the exact meaning. The phrase “μήποτε ἔσται ἐν τινι ὑμῶν καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος” has three distinct difficulties: one, what does “ἐν τινι ὑμῶν” mean? Two, what does “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” mean? Three, what does “ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος” mean? While these three are distinct issues there is tremendous interaction between the interpretations.

In addition, there is enormous interaction between the interpretations of these phrases and the doctrines of eternal security and perseverance. As discussed and defined in chapter two, there are six basic views (phenomenological-false believer, phenomenological-true believer, hypothetical, loss of reward, test of genuineness and irresolvable tension). A predisposition that one view is favorable over another can significantly bias the interpretation of the text. Yet the interpretation of the text has to be theologically informed.⁶

There are two issues with “ἐν τινι ὑμῶν”: one, does τις refer to anyone in the original audience or does τις refer to a certain one in the original audience. Two, is the author concerned that not even a single member would be lost and fall away from God or is the author concerned that one member might corrupt the entire group.

Τις can refer to either a certain one of a group or to anyone of a group.⁷ Ellingworth will argue that “ἐν τινι ὑμῶν” is referring to “individual members.”⁸ However, the use of τις with ὑμῶν and without μή in the New Testament refers to

⁶ A delicate dance between exegesis and theology is called for.

⁷ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1007-1008.

⁸ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 221.

anyone in a group (see: Matthew 24:23, 1 Corinthians 6:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:9). There are similar constructions in James 5:13, 14 and 19 (τις ἐν ὑμῖν) that would indicate the reference is to anyone in the community rather than to a certain individual of the community. Further most commentators and translations will prefer the use of anyone rather than a certain one.⁹ “Ἐν τινι ὑμῶν” is referring to anyone in the group.

The phrase “τις ἐξ ὑμῶν” of verse 13 has the same τις with ὑμῶν construction as “Ἐν τινι ὑμῶν” and is also referring to anyone in the community. The use of τις, without some form of σύ, in Hebrews 4:6, 4:11, 10:25 and 12:15-16 are entirely different constructions that could refer to certain individuals of the community.¹⁰

The second issue with τις ἐξ ὑμῶν is whether the author is concerned that not even a single member would be lost and fall away from God or is the author concerned that one member might corrupt the entire group. Ellingworth argues that one unbelieving member of the community might infect or contaminate the entire community. His argument is based on Hebrews 12:15 where the author of Hebrews is concerned that one unbelieving member could corrupt the whole community.¹¹ Hughes comes to a similar conclusion but his argument is based on 1 Corinthians 5:6 where the whole community is contaminated from “a little leaven.”¹² However, Moffatt maintains that the concern is for individuals, which he briefly points out in his commentary.¹³

⁹ For further discussion of “Ἐν τινι ὑμῶν” being taken as anyone see: Attridge, *Hebrews*, 116.

¹⁰ The use of τις in these passages is out of the scope of this work.

¹¹ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 221.

¹² Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), 145.

¹³ James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924; reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1968), 46 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

In an attempt to reconcile these points Lane states, “The writer is apprehensive that the community may falter in its response to the promise of God. Recognizing that it is individuals who are exposed to the peril of apostasy, his pastoral concern extends to every member of the congregation.”¹⁴ Lane correctly assesses that individuals are in danger and that individuals will suffer if care is not taken to avoid unbelief. However, Lane also properly highlights that there is community involvement with these individuals who are in danger. The community involvement is exceptionally clear in verse 13, as will be shown in the next section.

The meaning of “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” is difficult to determine. Hebrews 3:12 is the only New Testament usage of “καρδία πονηρά.” Matthew 15:9 uses καρδία and πονηρός but they are used in a different type of construction. The Septuagint provides two examples of similar types of constructions in Jeremiah 16:12 and 18:12. Καρδία is referring to the seat of a person’s physical, spiritual and mental life. In this passage it is making even a more specific reference to moral decisions.¹⁵ Clearly “καρδία πονηρά” is not referring to an accidental sin or a sin of omission.¹⁶ Should “καρδία πονηρά” not be clear enough, the next phrase “ἐν τῷ ἀποστήναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος” makes it clear that this heart turns from God. Ἀπιστίας is a genitive of quality meaning an unbelieving heart.¹⁷

The phrase “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” is also set in the Old Testament story of Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness. The author of Hebrews is using this story to illustrate the danger the audience faces. Hebrews 3:10 comments about the condition of Israel’s

¹⁴ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 86.

¹⁵ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 508.

¹⁶ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 222.

¹⁷ Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 47.

heart in the wilderness: “ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ.” There are three options to evaluate: one, to see this phrase as speaking of a willful act of apostasy in departing from God.¹⁸ Two, to take this phrase as passive drift away from the faith, which if not corrected leads to apostasy in departing from God.¹⁹ Three, to regard this phrase as speaking of those who appear to be Christians but have an unregenerate heart (or in other words were never truly Christians).²⁰

A key part of deciding which is the best option of the phrase “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” is the interpretation of the next phrase “ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος,” which is the last difficulty in Hebrews 3:12. The first thing to notice is the clear play on words with ἀπιστίας and ἀποστῆναι.

The construction of ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive ἀποστῆναι is either epexegetic or result. Those who take “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” to be a passive drift from the faith will argue for the construction to be epexegetic, which would read “leading you to fall away.”²¹ However, those who understand “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας” to be a willful departure from the faith would argue for this construction being result, which would read “as a result you fall away.”²²

The phrase “ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος,” can be seen a number of different ways. One, this speaks of the true believer who commits apostasy. Two, this

¹⁸ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 116; and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 66.

¹⁹ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 222; and Koester, *Hebrews*, 258.

²⁰ Leon Morris, “Hebrews,” *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 55-56.

²¹ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 222.

²² Attridge, *Hebrews*, 116.

speaks one who appeared to be a Christian, but was unregenerate, and has left Christianity. Three, this is addressing loss of reward for the true believer who blatantly disobeys.

It should be noted that those who turn away are turning away from the living God, θεοῦ ζῶντος. The author is making it clear that those who would depart are not just disagreeing over a doctrinal issue within Christianity. Rather they are leaving the living God and departing from the Christian faith.²³

There are many different ways to understand the whole phrase “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος.” It could be a true believer’s passive drift that leads to apostasy, the choice of a true Christian to abandon the faith that results in apostasy, the passive drift of one who appears to be a Christian but ends up denying Christ, the clear decision of an apparent Christian to leave Christianity, the passive drift of a true believer that results in the loss of reward, etc... The major exegetical options for this phrase have been explored. Which is the best option has been debated for many centuries. However, it is critical to understand that no matter which exegetical options are chosen it is extremely undesirable and needs to be avoided at all cost. In defining παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13, the important factor is not an exact exegesis of “καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος,” but a clear understanding that none of the options are pleasant. Verse 13 provides the solution to avoiding this absolute disaster.

An Examination of Hebrews 3:13

Hebrews 3:13 uses the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ instead of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους. Lane argues that the reflexive pronoun is used to emphasize the

²³ For further discussion see Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 146.

mutual responsibility each member of the community should feel for the others.²⁴

Ellingworth argues that *ἑαυτοῦ* and *ἀλλήλους* are synonymous (*ἑαυτοῦ* is functioning reciprocally) and cites Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13 and 1 Peter 4:8-10 where *ἑαυτοῦ* and *ἀλλήλους* are used interchangeably.²⁵ It is within the realm of possibility that the author of Hebrews is nuancing the meaning to emphasize mutual responsibility by using *ἑαυτοῦ*. However, as Hughes points out, this nuance must not be pushed too far.²⁶ Would the audience's responsibilities and privileges change that much if the text read *ἀλλήλους* instead of *ἑαυτοῦ*? Given that the responsibility of the audience does not change, it is best to view *ἑαυτοῦ* and *ἀλλήλους* as synonymous.

While Ellingworth and Lane disagree on *ἑαυτοῦ*, they both agree that the audience to which Hebrews is written probably met every day.²⁷ This is inferred from “καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν.” Ellingworth states that the range of activities is uncertain and Lane suggests that this may presuppose daily meetings of a house church. Others see “καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν” as hyperbole. Moffatt states it is used to emphasize “the keen, constant care of the community for its members.”²⁸

“Ἄχρις οὗ τὸ σήμερον καλεῖται” further clarifies “καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν.” This is giving the audience a sense that this needs to be done now, not tomorrow or next week, but now. The writer has already established that consequences of failure are catastrophic and the action commanded by *παρακαλέω* cannot wait. What the author is emphasizing is that the community of believers needs to care and minister to each other

²⁴ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 87.

²⁵ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 223.

²⁶ Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 147.

²⁷ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 223; and Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 87.

²⁸ Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 47.

today, not the specifics of how it is done. Whether this care and concern be done through a formal daily meeting, writing a letter, visiting the sick or some other means is not the concern of the author. The concern of the author is that it happens today.

The phrase “ἄχρις οὗ τὸ σήμερον καλεῖται” forms a beautiful paronomasia with παρακαλέω and καλέω. It is unfortunate that this paronomasia is lost in English translations.

Σήμερον is a key word that links verse 13 with the phrase “σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.” This exact phrase is found in Hebrews 3:7b-8a, 3:15 and 4:7b. The author of Hebrews is making it crystal clear that the audience must not harden their heart toward God and His word. The author repeats this phrase three times in the span of twenty verses. The sheer repetition of this thought and idea make it a major point. This phrase was covered in the section on Psalms 95.

In the first part of verse 13 the author is providing the positive solution for the negative problem of verse 12. In the last part of verse 13 the author is returning to the negative problem that can be avoided by the audience following the command in παρακαλέω. The last phrase in verse 13 is “Ἴνα μὴ σκληρυνθῆ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ἀπάτη τῆς ἀμαρτίας.” This ἵνα with the subjunctive indicates the purpose of the command παρακαλέω. The purpose of the command is to avoid being hardened (σκληρυνθῆ). Lane suggests that the passive, σκληρυνθῆ, be classified as a passive of permission and translates this phrase as “so that no one among you allows himself to be hardened.”²⁹ Concerning ἀπάτη Hughes points out that the background for this is undoubtedly the fall and that sin first deceives then hardens.³⁰ The key question that this phrase raises is not whether God will forgive sin but will sin harden so that forgiveness is no longer sought.

²⁹ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 81-82.

³⁰ Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 148.

As stated, verse 13 provides the positive solution to the negative problem in verse 12 marked out by the contrastive conjunction ἀλλά. The positive solution is found in the command παρακαλέω, which is to be done today.

Difficulties in Hebrews 3:14

Verse 14 is similar to verse 12 in that there are many difficulties and options that are hard to resolve. As with verse 12, interpretations in verse 14 have enormous interaction with the doctrines of eternal security and perseverance.³¹ What makes verse 14 exceptionally complicated is the number of ambiguities in how words and phrases should be understood. This makes Hebrews 3:14 “one of the more difficult verses in Hebrews.”³² Also, there are similarities between 3:14 and 3:6 that some see as significant.

The two remarkably vague phrases in verse 14 are: one, “μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.” The difficulty in this phrase is the definition of μέτοχος and the usage of the genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Two, “τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως.” The definitions of ἀρχή and ὑπόστασις are problematic. A third phrase that should be briefly mentioned is: “μέχρι τέλους.” Following a brief discussion of the above issues are the basic options for constructing and interpreting this verse.

In the phrase “μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ” μέτοχος is ambiguous. Μέτοχος can either mean: one, sharing or participating in (i.e. partaker). Two, business partner or companion.³³ Hughes argues for the use of use of partaker,³⁴ while Lane and Koester

³¹ The six basic views on eternal security and perseverance were defined in chapter two and recounted in the section on 3:12.

³² Attridge, *Hebrews*, 118.

³³ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 642.

³⁴ Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 149.

argues for the use of partner.³⁵ In this phrase, the genitive “τοῦ Χριστοῦ” can either “mean Christians partake ‘in Christ’ himself or that they partake ‘with Christ’ in inheritance.”³⁶ Ellingworth argues for “in Christ,”³⁷ while Lane uses “with Christ” in his translation of Hebrews 3:14.³⁸

ὑπόστασις is vague in the phrase “τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως.” ὑπόστασις can mean: one, “the essential or basic structure/nature of an entity.” Two, “a plan one devises for action.” Three, “situation, condition” or “frame of mind or confidence.” Four, “guarantee of ownership” or “entitlement.”³⁹

Moffatt maintains ὑπόστασις in this phrase means confident conviction or resolute hope and discusses the psychological meaning “with the associations of steadfast patience under trying discouragements.”⁴⁰ Attridge argues against Moffatt’s psychological connotations and that ὑπόστασις is not the act of endurance but the determination that produces such endurance.⁴¹ Ellingworth submits that ὑπόστασις is a reference to the ground or basis for παρρησία from 3:6 and should be translated a “reason for hope”.⁴²

The next ambiguity, which is minor, is ἀρχή. In this phrase it can either mean the beginning or the first principle. Modern commentators understand ἀρχή as beginning.

³⁵ Koester, *Hebrews*, 259-60; and Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 87.

³⁶ Koester, *Hebrews*, 260.

³⁷ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 226-27.

³⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 81.

³⁹ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1040-41.

⁴⁰ Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 48.

⁴¹ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 118.

⁴² Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 228.

However, Hughes will point out “that the commentators of the early and medieval centuries took the phrase to mean ‘the principle of the substance or foundation’ of the Christian life.”⁴³

“Μέχρι τέλους” can either refer to physical death or eschatological “rest.” Ellingworth argues that “μέχρι τέλους” cannot be specified,⁴⁴ while Lane holds it is specifying eschatological “rest.”⁴⁵

There are two main grammatical factors in constructing this verse: the intensive perfect γεγόναμεν⁴⁶ and the third class condition with εἴανπερ and the subjunctive κατάσχωμεν. Correctly translated the intensive perfect will emphasize the results of a past action. The third class condition sets “τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν” as the requirement for “μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν.” The other critical grammatical factor, especially for defining παρακαλέω, is the γὰρ of verse 14. This γὰρ is linking verse 13 and 14.

There are a number of different approaches to constructing Hebrews 3:14. Hughes makes an interesting argument for “μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ” representing baptism starting with μέτοχος meaning partner. He concludes the verse means, “We have the profession of our baptism written in our hearts, provided we hold our first confidence firm to the end.”⁴⁷ Hughes’ view is in the minority. Moffatt will translates the verse “for we only participate in Christ provided that we keep firm to the very end the confidence

⁴³ Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 152.

⁴⁴ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 228.

⁴⁵ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 88.

⁴⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 576.

⁴⁷ Hughes, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 151.

with which we started.”⁴⁸ Differing with Moffatt on the usage of the genitive “τοῦ Χριστοῦ” and how “τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως” should be nuanced Attridge translates Hebrews 3:14 “for we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold firm to the initial reality until the end.”⁴⁹ Lane’s translation disagrees with Attridge’s definition of μέτοχος and nuances “τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως” differently saying, “For we have become partners with Christ, supposing that we hold firmly to the end the basic position we had at the beginning.”⁵⁰

The essence of verse 14 (no matter what options or nuances are chosen for the difficulties) is a positive outcome for believers who hold firm (κατέχω), which is the antithesis to ἀποχωρέω from verse 12. Holding firm is part of the solution to avoiding the disaster described in Hebrews 3:12. The γὰρ links the command of παρακαλέω with the emphasis of holding on in 3:14.

The essentials from verse 14 for defining παρακαλέω is to realize that the community was being called to action by the command of παρακαλέω to help others hold on for a positive outcome.

Hebrews 3:15

Hebrews 3:15 is a quotation from Psalms 95:7b-8a, which has already been covered in the section on Psalms 95. There is some debate as to the relationship between verses 14, 15 and 16.⁵¹ Verse 15 is included in this discussion based on the punctuation in NA²⁷, which has Hebrews 3:12-15 as one sentence.

⁴⁸ Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 43-44.

⁴⁹ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 113.

⁵⁰ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 81.

⁵¹ For further discussion see Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 225-26.

Based on the division in NA²⁷, verse 15 is serving as a recap to remain faithful, a reminder of the consequences for failure and an introduction to the next section.

Meaning of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13

A brief overview of Hebrews 3:12-15 will help provide a foundation for considering the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13. The passage starts with a warning that believers need to avoid a dire consequence. As shown, it is exegetically difficult to know exactly what this consequence is, but it is disastrous and needs to be avoided. The contrast to this warning is the command of παρακαλέω that is to be done by the community of believers in a timely manner. This is to be done in order to avoid another catastrophic outcome, which is also exegetically problematic to precisely define. There is a positive, but extremely vague, statement about the believer's relationship to Christ conditioned on the believer holding on until the end. What the believer is to hold is challenging to know and what end is in mind is unclear. This passage closes with yet another caution that serves to recap the previous warnings.

The writer gives the command of παρακαλέω to the community. The expectation is that those in the community will be fulfilling this command with each other. The command is being given in the sense that believers are interacting with one another.

The definition for παρακαλέω from Chapter 3 provided four meanings. one, παρακαλέω can mean calling or summoning. This sense of calling or summoning can be nuanced in two ways: a) to invite someone or b) to appeal for aid. Two, παρακαλέω can mean to strongly encourage or exhort. Three, the meaning of παρακαλέω can be to comfort or console. Four, παρακαλέω can mean to entreat or beseech.

It is doubtful that παρακαλέω has the meaning of calling or summoning in the context of Hebrews 3:12-15. The author is not commanding them to invite each other to come together. Likewise the meaning of entreat or beseech is also unlikely. The community is not being commanded to make a request of one another.

The meaning of comfort or console in this context could be possible if it was argued that the hard situation that required comforting was the dire consequences. The problem with this possibility is that the command of παρακαλέω is intended so that the community will avoid the dire consequences.

The pattern for παρακαλέω to mean strongly encourage or exhort is motivating words that generally have a desired outcome. This passage in Hebrews is clearly warning believers to avoid a dreadful consequence, which is the desired outcome. It then follows that the command of παρακαλέω is for believers to give one another motivating words, in a timely manner, to help each other prevent the dreadful result of falling away. No doubt a repeat of the warning to guard and encouragement to hold fast was intended to be part of these motivating words. In short, believers are being called to strongly encourage and exhort each other without delay.

It also should be noted that while there is a clear command to give these motivating words in order to help each other avoid disaster, there are no specifics as to the content of these words. This is contrasted by 1 Thessalonians 4:18 where παρακαλέω is used to urge the readers to comfort each other with their eschological hope. Notice that in 1 Thessalonians the author specifics exactly what is to be used to comfort. Hebrews 3:13 leave this up to the audience.

The implication of this to the original audience will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SIGNIFICANCE OF ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΩ IN HEBREWS 3:13

This last chapter will answer the theological question: “So what?” What did this mean to the original readers, what does this mean to an overall understanding of theology, what does this mean to the current reader, and how should one’s life be different based on the information presented in this thesis?

Significance of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 to Original Audience

Chapter 4 demonstrated that the meaning of παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 is to strongly encourage or exhort. What the original audience is being called to do is use motivating words to help each other not harden their hearts to God. They were to be urging each other to have soft hearts to hear God. They were to be strongly encouraging and exhorting each other not to be hardened by sin.

It is also important to remember that the usage of σήμερον in Hebrews 3:13 was calling the audience to immediate action. This was not something to be done at a later time or date but it was to be done today.

Two significant items are: one, the specifics of the how and what of the motivating words are not given and, two, all the readers are given this command. The author left it completely open as to the specifics of these strongly encouraging words. The audience had great freedom in how to accomplish this. Next, the command was to all the readers, from the newest believer to the most mature. This means that the newest believer in the church has just as much responsibility to exhort one another as the most mature believer. The exhortation from the newest believer to the mature would

undoubtedly be different than the exhortation from the mature to the newest believer. While the exhortations are different, both are fulfilling the command. As pointed out at the end of chapter four, no doubt words to be alert (watching out for hearts of unbelief) and remarks to hold fast would be good candidates for the contents of an a exhortation.

Theological Significance of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13

Before a discussion about the theology of a particular passage one must always ask if the command to the original audience is applicable to believers today. A discussion hermeneutical method is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the book of Hebrews is addressing believers living in the same dispensation¹ or kingdom² as modern believers. In addition, Hebrews does not deal with cessation issues. Given these two, it is safe to interpret Hebrews as applying to contemporary believers.

There are a number of theologically significant points that arise from παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13. The first is in the area of ecclesiology. Hebrews 3:13 makes it clear that individuals in church need to be about the business of exhorting and strongly encouraging one another to help avoid hardened hearts and unbelief. It is not just the responsibility of the church and the meetings of the church to provide motivating words. It is responsibility of all believers, no matter their maturity. Believers need each other, not just to have “fun and fellowship,” but for the purpose of keeping some from departing from the faith. Further, the command for motivating words is to all believers. This means that new believers are to follow this command just as much as the mature.

¹ For those who are pre or post-millennial.

² For those who are amillennial and for some who are progressive dispensationalist.

The responsibility for this does not rest solely on the leadership of churches but with all believers.

The warning passages are full of theological peril. Key doctrines such as eternal security and perseverance hinge on how these passages are interpreted. The purpose of this work is to ask how does παρακαλέω fit in with these doctrines. Given the purpose of this paper, it has avoided conclusions on these doctrinal issues. However a few brief comments concerning these difficult doctrines is warranted.

If one takes the warning passages to speak of true Christians then their need for exhortation and strong encouragement speaks to the depravity that still exists despite regeneration.

As with many imperatives in Scripture, there seems to be a clear implication that the people of God play a role in effecting God's sovereign plan. This theological tension between human responsibility versus God's sovereignty has existed for many years. Hebrews 3:13 stands as a verse that implies believers have a choice and that the choice makes a real difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Modern Implications of Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13

Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 commands that believers are involved in each other's lives. The level of this involvement has to be such that believers are able to strongly encourage each other. This exhortation needs to be for the purpose of helping each other avoid hearts that would be hardened to the living God.

The command of exhortation and strong encouragement in Hebrews 3:13 is meant to help all believers in their struggle to have soft hearts. It must be remembered that the command of exhortation is to one another not just those who might be in danger. Not only does this mean that pastors, teachers, counselors and other church professionals are to be giving motivating words, but they also need to be receiving motivating words

from those they interact with. These words to those in leadership might have a different “flavor” than the words from those in leadership, but nonetheless the command includes exhorting those in leadership. Otherwise the leadership is not part of one another, which has very serious implications. This also speaks to the need of humility on the part of leadership to receive this strong encouragement.

The goal of the exhortation is to have a soft heart and heed God’s commands. Attaining this goal requires an awareness of the deceitfulness of sin and how that can harden hearts. The modern church has moved away from using language about sin and its deceitfulness, but the goal of the strong encouragement in Hebrews 3:13 cannot be complete without understanding sin, its deceitfulness and how sin can harden one’s heart.

The time frame for the exhortation is today. The command does not wait for a crisis, but starts now. The strong encouragement does not delay until the person might be in a better mood but begins now. The time frame is not when it is more convenient but today.

In the modern church, a crisis of faith in someone’s life is sent to the pastor or professional counselor. Παρακαλέω in Hebrews 3:13 commands believers to be exhorting each other. Perhaps when believers follow the command and time frame of Hebrews 3:13 there will be less need for appointments with pastors and professional counselors.

APPENDIX A

CHART OF LEXICOGRAPHERS' DEFINITIONS

CHART OF LEXICOGRAPHERS' DEFINITIONS

BASE MEANING	LSJ	BDAG	<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>PGL</i>
1 Calling or summoning	II Call in, send for, summon	1 To ask to come and be present where the speaker is	1 The sense of summon (or ask)	1 Call in, summon
	II2 Summon one's friend to attend one in a trial			
	II2b Summon a defendant into court			
1a To invite someone	II3 Invite	1b Invite someone	(catergoriezed in number 1)	
1b To appeal for aid	II4 Appeal to	1c Summon to one's aid, call upon for help	(catergoriezed in number 1)	2 Call on, invoke
2 Strongly encourage or exhort	III Exhort, Encourage	2 To urge strongly	2 Exhortation	4 Exhort
3 Comfort or console	III2 Comfort, console	4 To instill someone with courage or cheer	3 The sense of comfort	3 Comfort
	III3 Excite			
	IV Demand, require			
4 Entreat or beseech	V Beseech, entreat	3 To make a strong request for something	(catergoriezed in number 1)	5 Entreat, beseech
	VI Relent			
	VI2 Repent			
		5 Treat someone in an inviting or congenial manner		

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