

Hebrews Lesson 03

Hebrews Chapter 3

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Memory verses for this week: *James 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.:*

Introduction: In Chapter 2, we studied last week about giving heed to the things we have heard. We talked of the purpose of angels and how God has used them as messengers and protective agents in our behalf, and how that Jesus came and was made lower than the angels as he took on a fleshly body. But all things have been placed under Christ's authority. God speaks to us today through Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

I. Christ is Greater than Moses the Servant of God

Heb 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Heb 3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

We know that many of the Jews were not saved, but some of them were. Here, Paul addresses these saved Hebrews as "holy brethren." Saved people are holy in their soul, but unless we lead consecrated lives, our flesh is unholy. He asks us to consider some important things about Christ.

1. He is called the Apostle and high priest of our profession.
2. An Apostle was one who was sent. Moses was the Apostle of Israel.
3. Moses was appointed by the Lord... as was our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Moses was faithful in all his house... Christ was the epitome of faithfulness... he did all things by faith to God who appointed him as our great High Priest.
5. Jesus was greater than Moses because Christ is the one who built the house. Moses is part of the house that Jesus built.

Heb 3:3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

Heb 3:4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

Christ Built the House but Moses was only a Member.

Christ was not only an apostle but he is our High Priest. Apostle means the sent one, or a messenger.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Jesus was likewise faithful, as was Moses.

II Tim. 2:11-13, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

Jesus is certainly worthy of all glory.

Rev. 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Jesus came in the flesh and was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

I Tim. 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1.

Heb 3:5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

Heb 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

God is the one who built all things. Moses was faithful as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. Christ was a son over his own house. Note the difference... Christ is OVER his house... Moses is IN his house.

There is a difference between a son and a servant. In the story of the prodigal son, after the man came to himself, he wanted to come back to his father, not as a son, but as a servant.

Luke 15:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

Luke 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

Luke 15:19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

In verse 6, it says that we are his house. What is this referring to? The baptized saved believer makes up the church, and we become His house. We are God's house.

1 Pet 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

1 Pet 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 Pet 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

1 Pet 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

I liked the comments by J. Vernon McGee about us being God's house.

Not only is Christ superior to Moses in that He is the Creator and Moses is a creature, but also the best thing that could be said of Moses is that he was a *servant* of God—never was he called a son of God. Christ is *the* Son of God. There is quite a difference between the son in the house and a servant in a house. So Christ is superior to Moses on two counts: Christ is the Creator and He is the Son. This is very important to see.

“If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Paul had a way of using “ifs,” not as a condition but as a method of argument and of logic. We would understand him better if he had said, “*Since* we hold fast the confidence.” In other words, if we are sons of God and if we are partakers of the heavenly calling, we *will* be faithful and we will hold fast. This is the proof that we are of God's house.

For example, 1 John 2:19 puts it this way, “They went out *from* us, but they were not *of* us; for if they had been *of* us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all *of* us” (Italics mine). I have always believed that God has permitted the cults to come along to draw out of the churches those who are not really believers. The cults serve as God's strainer. The proof that you are a child of God is that you hold to the faith. That doesn't *make* you a child of God, but it does prove that you *are* a child of God. If you are a believer, you will hold on, not because you are able but because *He* is able to make you stand.

So the writer of this Hebrew epistle (who I believe to be the apostle Paul) is using the “if” of argument. “If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope

firm unto the end” means that you are a partaker of the heavenly calling; you are among the brethren.

I have always used the Bible as a means of testing. If a person really is a child of God, he will hold to the Word of God, and he is going to love the Word of God because he wants to hear his Father talking to him. ⁱ

Verse 5 speaks of how Moses was a faithful servant. It was in his house that Moses was faithful and Moses was a servant recognized of God.

Num. 12:7-8, "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Josh. 1:2, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

Moses was a testimony of the coming Prophet.

Deut. 18:15, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."

Deut. 18:18-19, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Verse 6 speaks of Christ being the faithful son over His House.

Eph. 2:21-22, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

I Pet. 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

While Moses was a testimony of Christ coming, he was a servant. Christ was more than a Prophet. He was Prophet, Priest, and King, and Christ was the only begotten Son of God. Those who are truly saved will persevere to the end because of Christ working in them.

ⁱ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

Heb. 4:14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

II Tim. 1:13, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

- a. To "hold fast," means to pursue a steady course. It is translated "made toward" in Acts 27:40.

Acts 27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

- b. There is great danger in not pursuing a steady course.

Rev. 2:5, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

- c. We need to realize that Christ is walking in the midst of His churches, and He is observing what the churches are doing today.

Rev. 1:12-14, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

Rev. 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

II. Some Israelites Did Not Reach Canaan due to Unbelief

Heb 3:7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

Heb 3:8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Since Jesus is far superior to Moses (who was known as God's Servant), we should look to Jesus. The Holy Spirit tells us to hear his voice. We find this quotation based off of Psalms 95.

Psa 95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

Psa 95:8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Psa 95:9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Psa 95:10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

Psa 95:11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Heb 3:9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Heb 3:10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

Heb 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

This advice given to the Hebrews by Paul is still wise advice to you and I. We need to listen to the Lord and to seek after God's ways. His ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts the word tells us. The Holy Spirit guided David to pen those words in Psalms, and Paul is directed to warn the people again that we should not harden our hearts and walk in disobedience. God was highly displeased with the Israelites and their fathers in the wilderness due to their unbelief.

Deuteronomy 1:32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,

Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Unbelief is a horrible sin because it denies God. God wants us to be people of faith. As I prepared this lesson on Hebrews the first time we taught it in 2001, we faced the horrible loss of life this at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon as terrorists commanded the hi-jacked planes and flew them directly in to those buildings. It was a horrible act of cowardice, and I feel that those who set this up will be found and brought to justice. In all this tragedy, I have seen more said this week about God and patriotism than ever in my life. Unfortunately, looking back now I know the turning back to God didn't last a month. If America will turn back to our roots and truly become the Christian nation that we claim to be, God will continue to bless us. But to do that, we have to be people of faith. Faith is clearly defined in God's Word.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Unbelief is what separated people from God and his great blessings for us. I mentioned last week that sin separates us from God, but it is not the sin that sends a soul to hell. It is that man or woman's denial of Jesus Christ. Unbelief separates us from God.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The Unbelief of their Fathers could cause the children to have hardened hearts. God warns them against this in verses 7 through 9.

Psa. 95:6-11, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

The day of temptation was a time of trial, but not a temptation to sin. v.

James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

Verse 9 goes on to say that Israel tempted God. Because of this, that generation did not enter the Canaan rest. Their problem was of the heart. They did not know the ways of God, but grieved His heart. We are warned to not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Eph. 4:30, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Because of their sin and hardened hearts, God kept them out of the land of rest, which was the land of victory. This speaks of a type of the victorious Christian life. Those who missed Canaan never made it back to Egypt, which was a type of lost humanity.

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

God calls on these Hebrews to take heed that they not get an evil heart of unbelief. When we don't believe, we don't draw near to God, and that means we leave him. If you don't feel as close to the Lord today as you used to feel, it is you that moved. God never leaves us nor forsakes us. So we make the first move to draw away. But the Holy Spirit is always there encouraging us to seek after and to come back to the Lord.

Notice that he calls our God the 'living God'. A lot has been spoken this week about the god Allah, and I am proud people have the right to worship him. But like Baal, and Mohammed, and a dozen other false gods, Allah is dead and in the tomb. Jesus is alive and sitting on the right hand of the father today.

The KJV Study Bible said this about departing from the Living God.

12–14. This warning is addressed to the **brethren** the professing believers, lest any have unbelief in his heart and thus depart from God. This **departing** (Gr *apostēnai*) is the source of our word apostasy, which is a deliberate departure from God’s full revelation. These Jewish brethren were being tempted by an “evil heart of unbelief” to return to Judaism. To do so meant they would have to reject that fuller revelation which they have received and return to the incomplete revelation of Judaism. Thus, they are admonished to **exhort one another daily** with the truths that will strengthen their faith in Christ, such as the truths in this epistle. ⁱⁱ

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

God calls upon us to exhort one another while it is called today in order that we will not be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It is a serious thing to harden your heart.

Prov 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Albert Barnes in Barnes Notes on the New Testament said this about the deceitfulness of sin.

The deceitfulness of sin—Sin is always deceitful. It promises more than it performs. It assures us of pleasure which it never imparts. It leads us on beyond what was supposed when we began to indulge in it. The man who commits sin is always under a delusion; and sin, if he indulges it, will lead him on from one step to another until the heart becomes entirely hardened. Sin puts on plausible appearances and preferences; it assumes the name of virtue; it offers excuses and palliations, until the victim is snared, and then spell-bound he is hurried on to every excess. If sin was always seen in its true aspect when man is tempted to commit it, it would be so hateful that he would flee from it with the utmost abhorrence. What young man would become a drunkard if he saw when he began exactly the career which he would run?

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Eph 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Eph 4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

ⁱⁱ Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1994.

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Heb 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

God wants people who not only start with faith in Christ, but they stay with Him all the way. If we begin and continue on in the service of the Lord, it is a good sign that we have been made partakers of Christ. The Christian is warned to not depart from God. Verse 12 talks of the awful sin of unbelief.

I Cor. 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Verse 13 tells believers to exhort and encourage one another.

Ex. 16:7, "And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?"

Since we are partakers of Christ, we are to hold the beginning of our confidence to the end. There is great importance in continuing in Christ. "Partakers is the Greek metochoi and is translated fellows in Heb.1:9. It is not the same word that is translated partakers in II Pet. 1:4, where it speaks of us being partakers of the divine nature.

Heb 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

Heb 3:16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

In these last five verses of chapter 3, the Spirit of God uses the case of Israel in the wilderness as a warning to all who now claim to be Christians. The people who fell in the wilderness were those who believed not. Because of unbelief, they never entered into God's rest. Moses and Aaron were numbered among those who never entered into Canaan. Canaan was a type of rest that remains for the people of God.

Deuteronomy 34:1 And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. 4 And the LORD said unto him,

This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

Heb 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

God was grieved with those who had sinned. God hates sin. He despised it in the Old Testament, and still hates it today.

Psa 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

If it were not for Christ, and the great gift he gave to us on Calvary, we would have to pay for our sins. But every one who comes to Christ in repentance and believes by faith on Jesus Christ, they can be born again and have forgiveness of sin.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

God was upset for forty years with the Israelites as they wandered in the desert. And ultimately, they fell in the wilderness. They could not enter in to God's rest for them due to unbelief. And know that this is true about heaven. NO unbeliever will enter into God's eternal rest without knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Heaven is God's prepared rest for those who believe.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

John 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Heb 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Israel was broken off because of unbelief.

Romans 11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

The bible has many examples of people who did not believe. Thomas was called a doubter because he did not believe that Jesus had resurrected from the tomb.

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

The man or woman who believes in Christ shall never die.

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

We need to be people who believe God. Are you an unbeliever? If you are, I pray you'll listen to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and come to Christ today while there is still time. The day is soon coming when salvation will be very hard to obtain, if at all. Christ will soon part those eastern skies. Accept Him while there is still an opportunity. We can be sure that heaven will be missed by those whose faith is not in Christ.

1. Just as those who died a physical death in the wilderness because of unbelief, so there will be spiritual death for those who have not faith in Christ.
2. Verse 15 speaks of hard hearts in the provocation. The provocation here referred to, is recorded in Num. 13,14. At Kadesh-barnea they turned back because of unbelief. They had "faith to sprinkle the blood of atonement (Ex.

12:28) and to come out of Egypt (a type of the world), but had not faith to enter the Canaan rest. See I Cor. 10:1-6.

1 Cor 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

1 Cor 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

1 Cor 10:3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

1 Cor 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

1 Cor 10:5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

1 Cor 10:6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

3. Verses 18 and 19 tell us that unbelief leads to no rest.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

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