

**Hebrews 3****Lesson 3****Christ Is Superior To Moses  
And Don't Harden Your Heart****Outline**

- I. Christ is Superior to Moses** (vv. 1-6)
  - A. *Christ is the faithful Apostle and High Priest in his house* (vv. 1-2)
  - B. *Christ is the builder of his house* (vv. 3-4)
  - C. *Christ is the Son over his house* (vv. 5-6)
  
- II. Don't Harden Your Heart** (vv. 7-19)
  - A. Warning from the example of Israel (vv. 7-11)
    - 1. They hardened their heart (vv. 7-9)
    - 2. They did not enter into rest (vv. 10-11)
  
  - B. *Beware lest you depart in unbelief* (vv. 12-15)
    - 1. Beware (v. 12)
    - 2. Exhort one another (v. 13)
    - 3. Hold the beginning of our confidence (v. 14)
    - 4. Hear his voice (v. 15)
  
  - C. *Those of Israel who rebelled* (vv. 16-19)
    - 1. All who came out of Egypt (v. 16)
    - 2. Did not enter into rest (vv. 18-19)
    - 3. Why? (vv. 17-19)
      - a. Sinned (v. 17)
      - b. Did not obey (v. 18)
      - c. Unbelief (v. 19)

**Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter****Hebrews 3:2**

For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

**Hebrews 3:8**

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness.

Having established that Christ is superior to prophets and angels, the author now proceeds to show that Christ is superior to Moses. Then he turns to the second of the five warning sections.<sup>1</sup>

### **Christ is Superior to Moses (vv. 1-6)**

Moses was one of the most significant figures in the mind of a Jew; perhaps second to Abraham. Any appeal to turn back to Judaism would be an appeal to follow Moses. Hence the need to demonstrate that Christ is far above Moses.

Here the Hebrew Christians are addressed as “partakers of the heavenly calling.” Their call to salvation was from heaven and pertained to going to heaven. “The older religion was an earthly calling with an earthly inheritance. Christianity is a spiritual religion involving a heavenly calling with a spiritual and heavenly inheritance as its ultimate object.”<sup>2</sup>

*Christ is the faithful Apostle and High Priest in his house* (vv. 1-2). The reader is urged to consider<sup>3</sup> Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest. An apostle is one sent forth. Thus, Jesus is called an apostle in that he was sent by God (Gal. 4:4). He is our High Priest as seen in the previous chapter. Being the Apostle and High Priest are not necessarily separate offices. He was sent (thus an Apostle) as the High Priest.

But the connection seems to demand that; there should be some allusion here to one who sustained a similar rank among the Jews; and it is probable that the allusion is to Moses, as having been the great apostle of God to the Jewish people, and that Paul here means to say, that the Lord Jesus, under the new dispensation, filled the place of Moses AND of the high priest under the old, and that the office of “apostle” and “high priest,” instead of being now separated, as it was between Moses and Aaron under the old dispensation, was now blended in the Messiah.<sup>4</sup>

The reader is told that Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of their confession. They had held to and publicly acknowledged who he was. “The full meaning of this confession had obviously been missed by some of these readers, but this is not all that surprising, for it carried with it results which were of a revolutionary nature for the Jewish mind.”<sup>5</sup>

Moses is never called an apostle, but he was one in that he was sent by God (Exo. 3:10, 13, 15; 4:28; 5:22; 7:16; Acts 7:35). He was faithful as God’s servant (Num. 12:7). The comparison is obvious. Both Moses and Jesus are said to be faithful in God’s house.

*Christ is the builder of his house* (vv. 3-4). Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses just as a builder has more glory and honor than the house. God is the builder of all things (v. 5).<sup>6</sup> This gives us evidence of the deity of Christ. He is the builder (v. 3), but God is said to be the builder (v. 4). Thus, Jesus Christ is God!

1 See the Introduction for a list of all five sections.

2 Daniel H. King, Sr, *The Book of Hebrews*, Truth Commentaries, 106.

3 This means “to observe fully” (Strong’s). They were to meditate and give careful attention to what is said about Jesus and what that means.

4 Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft.

5 King, *ibid.*, 107.

6 Perhaps the author is alluding to Psalm 127:1.

Moses was in God's house, but Christ is the builder of God's house<sup>7</sup>. Thus, he is superior.

*Christ is the Son over his house* (vv. 5-6). Moses was a faithful servant in God's house (Num. 12:7). His service and work served as a testimony pointing to better things. Moses was involved in the preparation, but Christ was the fulfillment. Christ holds the exalted position of Son over his own house. The people of God are that house of God, but conditioned upon holding fast and remaining firm to the end (v. 6).

### **Don't Harden Your Heart (vv. 7-19)**

Here the author begins the second of the five warning sections of the book that continues through much of the next chapter (4:16). The warning is against hardening the heart and rebelling like Israel of old did under Moses.

*Warning from the example of Israel* (vv. 7-11). The writer quotes from Psalm 95:7-11 and attributes that to the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> This Psalm pleads for obedience today lest the heart become hardened.<sup>9</sup> To refuse or delay obedience has a hardening effect on the heart.

**They hardened their heart (vv. 7-9).** This Psalm points to Israel's rebellion in the wilderness when they murmured against Moses and the Lord because they had no water (Exo. 17:1-7). There in the wilderness they put God to the test by constantly complaining and rebelling, although they witnessed God's works for forty years (cf. Num. 14:22).

**They did not enter into rest (vv. 10-11).** Because they hardened their hearts and didn't obey, God's anger was stirred. They were always going astray.<sup>10</sup> God said, "they have not known my ways" (v. 10).<sup>11</sup> Thus, he swore that they would not enter into their rest in the land of Canaan (Num. 14:21-24).

Daniel King's observation is worth considering: "Since the first case cited appeared at the beginning of the wilderness wanderings and the second appeared at the end, this suggests that the hardening of their hearts was a process that persisted over the entire forty years of their wanderings."<sup>12</sup>

*Beware lest you depart in unbelief* (vv. 12-15). Here application is made from the Psalm. If the Hebrews did not take heed, they will depart, just like Israel, to the point of unbelief. The warning is that it could happen to "any of you" (v. 12). Thus, there are four things they are told to do:

**Beware (v. 12).** In view of the ever present danger, each Christian should "take heed" (KJV, "take care" ESV), constantly checking his spiritual condition.

7 Christ is the "Founder of all things, including the Jewish Theocracy as well as the Christian Church" (Robert Milligan, *Vol. IX – Epistle to the Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary, 116).

8 Later he quotes the same Psalm and attributes it to David (4:7). This affirms that David wrote by inspiration (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21).

9 Notice each time the term "today" is used in this chapter and the next, it is contrasted to hardening the heart (3:7-8, 13, 15; 4:7).

10 Compare the statement "have put Me to the test now these ten times" (Num. 14:22).

11 Perhaps "have not heeded My voice" is a parallel phrase (Num. 14:22).

12 King, *ibid.*, 113.

**Exhort one another (v. 13).** “Each reader of this letter to the Hebrews is to be an encourager of his brethren.”<sup>13</sup> The fact that they were to do this daily, while it is “today”, may point to some urgency due to a looming crisis (i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70).

If we fail to exhort one another the danger is ever increased that some of us will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. “If the members of every congregation of disciples, would all watch over one another, not as censors, but as members of the body of Christ, how many errors might be corrected in their incipency. But as it is, how very different are the results. How many delinquent Christians are allowed to become hardened in sin before even the Elders of the Church call on them and admonish them!”<sup>14</sup>

**Hold the beginning of our confidence (v. 14).** To be partakers with Christ and not depart, one must hold firm and steadfast to the confidence he had when he obeyed the gospel. This connects with what was professed (confessed) at the time (cf. v. 1).

**Hear his voice (v. 15).** Since the “end” (v. 14) had not been reached, the reader is admonished to hear the voice of God (who speaks through his Son, 1:1). He again quotes from Psalm 95:7-8 to make his point.

*Those of Israel who rebelled* (vv. 16-19). The point here is to emphasize how great the danger of falling is by showing how many fell in the wilderness before reaching the promise land. That number was “all who came out of Egypt” (v. 16). While there were exceptions (i.e. Joshua and Caleb), the author is focusing on the greater picture. It wasn’t a select few that fell, but the whole group (of these that came out of Egypt). They were not allowed to enter into their rest (vv. 18-19). That number sends a strong warning to us.

The reason for their fall was their sin (v. 17), their disobedience (v. 18), and their unbelief (v. 19; cf. v. 12).

The parallel is clear. The Israelites came out of Egypt and fell before reaching the promise land. The same could happen to the Hebrew and to us. We could easily fall before reaching our land of rest (heaven).

<b>Israel</b>	<b>Bondage of Egypt</b>	<b>Water of Red Sea</b>	<b>Wilderness Wandering</b> (Many fell before they made it...)	<b>Promise Land</b>
<b>Today</b>	<b>Bondage of Sin</b>	<b>Water of Baptism</b>	<b>Now</b> (We too could fall before...)	<b>Heaven – Our Promise Land</b>

<b>Use of the Old Testament in this Chapter</b>	
<b>Verse in Chapter 3</b>	<b>Old Testament Reference</b>
vv. 7-11	Psalm 95:7-11
v. 15	Psalm 95:7-8

<sup>13</sup> Gareth L. Reese, *Hebrews*, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Milligan, *ibid.*, 125.

## Questions

1. What arguments are given to show that Christ is superior to Moses?
2. In what sense was Christ an apostle?
3. Was Moses an apostle? If so, how do we know?
4. Is the Hebrew writer trying to diminish Moses in the mind of the Hebrews?
5. What evidence is found in this chapter that Jesus is deity?
6. Summarize the warning (vv. 7-19) in one sentence.
7. What do we learn from the fact that Psalm 95 is attributed to the Holy Spirit?
8. What is to be learned from the quotation of Psalm 95?
9. What does verse 12 tell us about how great the danger of apostasy is?
10. What point is to be learned from how many fell in the wilderness (v. 16)?