

## Hebrews 3

**What does “*Therefore*” link back to (v. 1)?** The fact that Jesus is our merciful and faithful High Priest. He is the One God anointed to represent human beings to Himself (2:17-18).<sup>1</sup>

**How does he address his readers?** As “*holy brothers*” ....their heavenly, holy High Priest is not ashamed to call them brothers (2:11). It should bless and encourage us that Jesus calls us His holy brothers. We are partners in His heavenly calling.

**What are the holy brothers commanded to do (v. 1)?** Fix their thoughts on Jesus (Colossians 3:1-2).

**How is Jesus described (v. 1)?** As an Apostle and High Priest.

**How is Jesus an Apostle?** Apostle means “one who is sent with message.” Jesus was sent from heaven with a message i.e. to reveal the Father to humankind...a message of love.

**What does it mean that Jesus is our High Priest?** He is our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) and intercessor (Romans 8:34). He didn’t merely offer the sacrifice for our sins; He was the sacrifice.....the ultimate, once-for-all sacrifice. God appointed Him to represent human beings to Himself (2:17-18).

**How is Jesus characterized (v. 2)?** He was faithful to His calling that was given by the Father. **Who is He compared with?** Moses **How does Jesus compare to Moses (v. 2)?** They are both described as faithful.

The ancient Rabbis considered Moses to be the greatest man ever, greater than the angels. Moses was arguably the greatest national hero in the eyes of the Israelites. To say that Jesus was superior to Moses was a huge deal to the Jews. Note that the author of Hebrews does nothing to criticize Moses; he only looks to properly exalt Jesus.

**Why was Jesus found to be worthy of greater honor than Moses (3b-6)?** Jesus Christ is far superior to Moses because he was not only the servant in the house; he was the builder of the house. Moses was a servant, but Jesus was a Son. God the Son, built the house as well as served in it, thus Jesus is a greater figure than Moses. So the comparison is made between these two great figures, Moses and Christ, and once again Christ is seen as superior.

**What are we encouraged to do (v. 6)?** Hold to our courage and hope. Hang in there as a follower of Jesus. Endurance is a proof and reality of a right relationship with God. Our courage and hope reveal that our faith is real. Don’t bail out when life gets tough. We don’t have to fight this battle alone (1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6). He will not abandon us – an encouraging message to the Jewish Christians who are wavering in their faith.

**Which period in the history of Israel is this passage referring to (vv. 7-19)?** The 40 year period of wandering in the wilderness. These verses speak of Israel's refusal to trust and obey God and thus they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land during the Exodus (Numbers 13:30-14:10). God did not accept their unbelief and He condemned that generation of unbelief to die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:22-23, 28-32).

**What does the word “*Today*” imply (v. 7)?** A sense of urgency, importance, immediacy. As the Holy Spirit speaks, we must hear and heed His voice and not allow our hearts to become hardened. There is *urgency* to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He never prompts us to get right with God *tomorrow* (2 Corinthians 6:2).

**What problem did Israel have (vv. 8, 10, 15)?** Hearts that were hard. They tested and tried God instead of believing and trusting.

**What was the rebellion (vv. 8, 15)?** Israel's refusal to trust and enter the Promised Land during the Exodus (Numbers 13:30-14:10).

**What two things are said about the ancient Israelites (v. 10)?** “*Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.*” **What was His attitude toward them (v. 10, 11)?** Anger....they refused to trust God.

**What did God swear He would do to them (v. 11)?** Judgment.....He condemned that generation of unbelief to die in the wilderness. They would never see the Promised Land. **Who were the two exceptions?** Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:28-30).

**What does “rest” mean (v. 11)?** Peace with God. The enjoyment of all that God has promised us, not just going to heaven. A full spiritual inheritance. Our inheritance is both for the present day (Ephesians 1:3-13) and a future day (1 Peter 1:3-4). Rest includes deliverance from the burden of observing the Law in order to win God’s approval.

**What is the second warning of Hebrews (v. 12)?** Against having an unbelieving sinful heart that turns away from the living God. The danger of disbelief (3:12) which results in heart hardening (3:13).

**What danger did the Hebrews face (vv. 12-13)?** Being hardened by sin’s deceitfulness and turning away from the living God.

**What should we do to avoid this danger (v. 13)?** Encourage one another. This shows our responsibility to both *give* exhortation and to *receive* exhortation. Mutual encouragement in godliness is something we all need. Mutual accountability and encouragement of one another are the antidote to the poison of unbelief

**In what ways is sin deceitful (v. 13)?** We may think that because God does not punish the sinner immediately, sin really does not matter. Sin often looks beautiful in anticipation but it is hideous in retrospect.

**What is required in order for us to be partakers with Christ (v. 14)?** We must continue to walk by faith, to trust and obey God. We don’t hold fast in order to retain our salvation but as proof that we have been genuinely saved.<sup>2</sup>

**How are believers characterized (v. 14)?** We belong to Him and share in His blessings.

**What word appears 4 times (vv. 7-15)?** Heart(s). **What does that tell us about God?** He is focused on our hearts. Above all, he wants our hearts. Hearts that are devoted and surrendered to Him. He wanted the heart of Cain in Genesis 4; he wanted the hearts of the Israelites in the Old Testament which is why he repeatedly sent prophets to urge them to turn back to Him. He has not changed. He still wants our hearts today.

**With whom was He angry for 40 years (v. 17) and what happened to them?** Those Jews who came out of Egypt. They died before the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

**How did the Israelites respond to Moses’ leadership (vv. 16-19)?** Badly....they rebelled against Moses and suffered the consequences. The implication for us is "How will we respond to the leadership of Jesus Christ who is the greater figure?" Do we rebel against him or have we given our hearts to him?

**How many people sinned (v. 16)?** All of them. About 600,000 people. **What is the lesson?** The majority is not always right nor worthy of following.

**Note: vv. 8, 15 “Do not harden your hearts.”** We often say our hearts become hard because of what *others* or *circumstances* do to us. But the fact is that we harden our own hearts in *response* to what happens to us.

**To whom did “He swear that they should not enter into His rest” (v. 18)?** To those who disobeyed. One might be tempted to think the key to entering rest is *obedience*. But the disobedience mentioned in 3:18 is an outgrowth of the unbelief mentioned in 3:19. The unbelief came first, then the disobedience.

**What consequences did they suffer (v. 19)?** The loss of God’s blessing and the failure to realize His promise of living in the Promised Land. **What is the lesson for us?**

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Hebrews 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 40

<sup>2</sup> Believer’s Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 2166