

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
A Study of Hebrews 3:1-19
By Pastor Marcus Bates

Introduction – Review

- The apostle Paul is believed to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews (**GC 347, 411, 413, 420-421**).
- Timothy was a close ministry associate of Paul, and is mentioned in the book of Hebrews (**Heb. 13:23**), similar to other epistles written by Paul (**2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 1:18; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:1; Philemon 1:1**).
- Produced prior to Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70, this epistle was written to Jewish Christians, and might have also been used as an evangelistic tool to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel message.
- One of the central themes in the book of Hebrews is the “**Jesus is better than . . .**” theme.
- **Heb. 1:1-14** describes how Christ is better than angelic beings; in like manner, **Heb. 2:1-18** also implies that Christ, the second Adam, is better than the first Adam and every other human being.

Hebrews 3 – Reflections on Hebrews 3:1-6

- Paul encouraged his fellow Hebrew Christians that, as brethren who have received a holy calling from God, they should discern Jesus as the true Apostle and High Priest of the Christian faith, who was faithful to God in every possible way as the One called to be the Messiah and Savior of the world.
- Moses was an OT type of Christ, who was faithful in his home duties, as well as in his role as the leader of ancient Israel during the Exodus from Egypt and in the building of the wilderness sanctuary.
- As great as Moses was, Christ is still worthy of more glory than Moses, simply because the One who builds the house (the sanctuary) deserves more honor than the house itself (the sanctuary itself) or the human beings (like Moses and the priests) who were appointed as stewards to oversee the house (the sanctuary).
- Every house is built by a human being, but God is ultimately the one who builds all things (**1 Cor. 3:9-11**).
- Moses was certainly faithful to his responsibilities in his home and in God’s house (the sanctuary), and his faithfulness stands as an excellent example and testimony of godliness to all future generations.
- Yet, Christ is better than Moses as the one true faithful Son over His own spiritual house of the Christian Church; faithful believers are a part of this true spiritual house, as long as they remain true to God and hold onto their confidence and hope in Jesus Christ for the remainder of their earthly lives.

Hebrews 3 – Reflections on Hebrews 3:7-11

- Paul reminded his fellow Hebrews Christians to recall the unfaithfulness and rebellion of some of the Israelites toward God in the wilderness during the Exodus as an example and lesson of what not to do.
- As the Holy Spirit speaks in the present time, believers will not harden their hearts if they hear and obey God’s voice; sadly, some Israelites resisted the work of the Spirit during their 40-year wilderness wandering after the Exodus, having provoked and tempted God to anger because of their lack of faith.
- The Israelites witnessed God’s regular supernatural interventions in their behalf during the Exodus from Egypt, and yet some still doubted and questioned His love, trustworthiness, and watch care over them.
- The consistent lack of faith displayed by some Israelites during the wilderness wandering after the Exodus grieved the heart of God deeply; they became settled and hardened in their rebellious ways against God.
- A refusal to know God and His principles actually disqualified the unfaithful Israelites from entering into God’s spiritual rest of salvation; this spiritual rest points to both the seventh-day Sabbath (**Exo. 16:1-30**) and the promised land of Canaan (**Deut. 12:9-10; 31:15-21**), which provided both a time (the Sabbath) and a place (Canaan) for perpetual rest from their wilderness wanderings after the Exodus.

Hebrews 3 – Reflections on Hebrews 3:12-15

- Paul offered another caution to his fellow Hebrew Christians, telling them to be very careful not to follow the rebellious example of some their unfaithful Israelite ancestors by departing from having faith in the living God; their evil example is preserved as a lesson for later believers to learn from and avoid repeating.

- Paul encouraged his readers to exhort and encourage one another in the faith every day, so that their hearts would not be hardened through the deceitful and mysterious nature and effects of sin.
- Christians should experience a renewed salvation with Jesus Christ each and every day (**Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:16; Titus 3:5**), and hold on to this daily saving experience in a confident, steadfast manner for the duration of their lives in order to be saved and see the eternal world (**Matt. 24:13**).
- Similar to **verses 7-8**, Paul reminded his readers that they must hear and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit in the present time (“today”), and avoid the dangerous spiritual process of hardening their hearts against God and His principles (**Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19**), unlike some of their Israelite ancestors who rebelled against Him during the 40-year wilderness wandering after the Exodus from Egyptian bondage.

Hebrews 3 – Reflections on Hebrews 3:16-19

- Again, Paul repeated his admonition to his Hebrew Christian readers, saying that some of their Israelite ancestors, despite hearing and seeing all of God’s wonderful supernatural works during the Exodus, still chose to provoke God to anger by doubting Him and refusing to demonstrate faith in Him.
- However, some Israelites chose to have faith in God during the Exodus in Moses’ time; these faithful ones did not provoke God to anger, and chose the path of hope and trust by following God and His principles.
- God was grieved by and disappointed with those who sinned by resisting and rebelling against Him during the 40-year Israelite wilderness wandering; the people in this unfaithful group ended up dying prior to seeing God’s promise fulfilled; they were not allowed to enter into the land of Canaan (which had been promised to the ancestors of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and their bodies were buried in the desert.
- Once again, this unfaithful Israelite group who refused to trust in God were not allowed to enter into God’s promised rest because of their unbelief; this “rest” points to the spiritual rest of salvation, the weekly rest of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the physical rest of entering the land of Canaan, where they could settle and rest from their wilderness travels; these blessings were all forfeited because of unbelief.

Summary of Hebrews 3:1-19

- Christ is the one true Apostle and High Priest, much better than all other human apostles and high priests.
- Christ is also much better than Moses, as the one true Builder of God’s spiritual house (the Christian Church), which is made up of every faithful believer.
- Believers should also continually be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit by hearing and obeying God, and not follow the rebellious, unfaithful example of some of the Israelites during the 40-year wilderness wandering after the Exodus from Egyptian bondage.
- These rebellious Israelites demonstrated a lack of faith and hope to find spiritual rest in God as their Savior; because they could not enter into this spiritual rest of salvation, they also could not truly enter into the weekly seventh-day Sabbath rest or enter into the land of Canaan that God had promised to give them to rest from their wilderness wanderings and permanently settle in the promised land.
- There is a powerful spiritual lesson to learn in this chapter – we must not grieve God’s heart through unbelief, but we must choose to hear and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit and live by faith in God; if we choose to be faithful, we will enter into God’s spiritual rest of salvation; this saving experience will also allow us to truly enter into the weekly seventh-day Sabbath rest, as well as help us to prepare to enter into our final eternal rest, which can be referred to as the heavenly Canaan of the eternal world.
- Overall, **Heb. 3:1-19** teaches us that Jesus is better than Moses, all earthly apostles, and all earthly high priests; He has also built a better spiritual house (the Christian Church), and offers a better rest than the earthly Canaan of the OT – if we are faithful to Him, He offers us an eternal rest in the heavenly world!