

Hebrews 3–4: Better Than Moses

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Fact: The Son is better than a faithful servant (3:1–11).

The writer of Hebrews calls his readers to the true focal point of their faith: Jesus Christ (3:1), comparing him to Moses, the head of the Old Covenant religion. Jesus was sent by the Father to do His will (as an “apostle”), and he was faithful in those responsibilities. While Moses was also faithful to the responsibilities God gave him (3:2), Jesus is worthy of greater honor, not because of faithfulness, but because of rank (3:3–4). Moses was a faithful servant, but Jesus Christ is a faithful Son (3:5–6).

Warning: Don’t miss God’s “rest” because of your unbelief (3:12–4:3).

In the days of Moses, God’s people, the Israelites, were rescued from Egypt, went through the Red Sea, ate the manna and quail, saw water come from a rock, and observed God’s daily protection. However, when the time came to enter the Promised Land, they rebelled, refusing to trust God. Because of their unbelief, God judged them, making them wander in the wilderness for forty years until that entire generation died (3:15–19). Therefore, the writer encourages his Jewish readers to persevere in faith in Jesus Christ because God is displeased with his people’s unbelief (3:7–11). Therefore, the readers must avoid an evil heart of unbelief (3:12) and encourage one another to persevere in faith in Jesus Christ (3:13). Those who share in God’s heavenly calling (3:1) continue in faith in Jesus Christ (3:14).

In a similar way, the eternal “rest” the followers of Christ are seeking cannot be entered if we are unbelieving and do not continue on in faith in Christ. Therefore, we should have a solemn and sober fear in our lives (4:1). The Israelites in the wilderness had heard the truth, but they did not respond in faith. We have heard the truth, but if we do not exercise faith, we too will be condemned (4:2). The only way to enter the “rest of God” is by faith in Jesus Christ (4:3).

Objection: Wasn’t the Promised Land God’s “rest” (4:4–10)?

An alert listener might object, saying that Israel did finally reach God’s “rest,” the Promised Land. However, although God rested on the seventh day of creation (4:4), he still offers rest to the Israelites in David’s day (Ps 95:11; cf. 4:7). The generation following the disobedient Israelites (who got to go into the land) did not experience God’s eternal rest, because God was still offering it to the people in David’s day (4:8). Therefore, God’s people pursue this “rest” (4:9) when God has completed his saving work in them, just as Jesus finished his work (4:10).

Exhortation: Let us persevere in faith in Jesus Christ (4:11–13).

In conclusion, we must hold fast the confession of our faith in Jesus Christ if we will enter God’s eternal rest (4:11). We must avoid the unbelieving disobedience of the Israelites who failed to enter God’s rest. True faith is essential to pleasing God, and he is not fooled (4:12). Furthermore, we will all stand before this all-seeing and all-knowing God someday (4:13). If we turn back from faith in Christ, we will stand in judgment before him (cf. Rev 1:16; 2:12).

Exhortation: Let us come to God confidently through our great High Priest (4:14–16).

Since Jesus Christ is a great high priest, we should continue on in faith in him (4:14). This priest, Jesus Christ, has been tempted in every human way, with one exception: he did not

have a sin nature (4:15). Since we have a perfect high priest to represent us before God, we can come *boldly* into God's presence (4:16). Not only can we approach God to worship through our great high priest, we can also boldly ask God for help when we need it.

To Think About:

What does "an evil, unbelieving heart" (3:12) look like in our lives?

How can we simultaneously "draw near with confidence" (4:16) and "fear lest we seem to have failed to reach [God's rest]" (4:1)?

How do we "strive to enter that rest" (4:11)? What does that mean for us in different stages of life?

Who wields the "sharp, two-edged sword"? What is the significance of this?

Praying through Hebrews:

For my own heart: for grace to discern an evil, unbelieving heart (3:12)

For my brothers and sisters in Christ: to strive to enter God's eternal rest (4:11)

For my church: that WBC would exhort each other every day to persevere in faith in Jesus (3:13)

You Are the Christ

In the beginning, in the form of God,
With just a word You sang creation's song,
But when by sin humanity was marred,
You took on flesh to save a world gone wrong.

You are the Christ, Son of the living God!
My rebel heart in mercy You pursued.
No other name deserves my praise,
You are my life, my all, and I belong to You.

At Calvary, the soldiers chose the nails
To fasten You upon the cruel tree.
The hammer drove into Your sinless hands
The nails you chose to pay sin's penalty.
Triumphantly prevailing over hell,
You broke sin's curse by rising from the dead.
Parading captives forth in victory,
You freed my soul and crushed the serpent's head.
And when one day redemption is complete,
I gaze at last upon Your face unveiled,
My voice shall echo through eternity,
"In spite of me, Your saving grace prevailed!"