

Christ is Superior to Moses
Hebrews 3:14
Part Six

I have been a pastor of this church for a lot of years. And over these many years I have known hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people who have professed to be Christians or in other words who have professed to have a personal relationship with God the Father through faith in Christ in His eternal Son or in other words the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of those individuals, spiritually speaking, have thrived over the years. No matter what life may have thrown at them, they have continued to hold on to their faith in Christ. No matter how severe the temptation, they have continued to fight on. Rather than being drawn away from God and His word or the people of God they have persevered.

And should that surprise us that so many of these professing believers have persevered in this way? No! It should not surprise us. Those who have been saved; those who have been truly born again will persevere in the midst of difficulties or in the midst of temptations because their faith in Christ is real.

Now does this mean that no true born again person or saved person will ever find themselves struggling with their faith or at a moment in time find themselves choosing against their faith. No! But certainly that will not be the pattern of their life. Those who have been saved; those who have been truly born again, will as a pattern of their life, walk in faith or in or in other words they will persevere and this is what the Bible teaches.

And hopefully this thought will come alive for us this morning as we return to our study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to a group Hebrew Christians who were suffering a great persecution and who under that persecution had begun to struggle in their faith. And some of them had begun to struggle so much in their “faith” that they were even thinking about returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author seek to minister to them in this struggle? He sought to strengthen their faith by focusing on the superiority of Christ, which has led us to the question that we are now asking. How did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior?

The author saw Christ as superior to the prophets (Hebrews 1:1-4).

The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the angels (Hebrews 1:5-2:18).

And now we are in the process of seeing that the author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-4:13). This section that we are presently examining began in **Hebrews 3:1** and will continue all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13**. So, what have we seen so far within this section?

First of all, we have seen that Christ, as an example of faithfulness, is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6).

So after the author Hebrews had made this point in **Hebrews 3:1-6**, what did this lead the author to do next? Christ's superior example of faithfulness led the author to warn his readers against the sin of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). And this is where we presently are in terms of our study.

So how did the author begin this warning section? The author began this warning section by highlighting for his readers the past failure of Israel in the wilderness when they hardened their hearts against God and were ultimately judged for that hardening (Hebrews 3:7-11). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:7-11**.

Then what happened? After the author had highlighted Israel's past failure and subsequent judgment, he then, in light of Israel's past failure, exhorted his readers, in Hebrews 3:12-13.

And what did he exhort his readers to do? He, first of all, in **verse 12**, exhorted his readers to **“take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart.”** And secondly in **verse 13** he exhorted his readers to **“encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today.’”** So now we are ready to move on in our text.

After exhorting his readers in Hebrews 3:12-13, the author stressed the vital importance of perseverance (Hebrews 3:14).

So now let me read for you **Hebrews 3:14** and see if this is not so. **“For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”**

So did the author, after he had exhorted his readers in **Hebrews 3:12-13**, stress the vital importance of perseverance? Yes, I believe he did. So now let us look at the verse more closely and see if this is not so.

And how did the verse begin? The verse began with the word **“for.”** So, what is the significance of this word?

The word **“for”** introduced the author’s explanation for why he had exhorted his readers in the way that he had just exhorted them in **Hebrews 3:12-13**, or in other words why he had exhorted them in **verse 12** to take care that there not be in any one of them an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God and then why he had exhorted them in **verse 13** to encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today.

And what was the author’s explanation for why he had exhorted them in the way that he had been exhorted them? **“For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”**

Or in other words, the reason why the author exhorted them in **verses 12-13** was because he knew that “if he” or “if they” did not persevere, in the way that he was exhorting them to persevere, then they could not assume that they were in fact **“partakers of Christ.”**

So, what exactly is a “partaker of Christ?” The word “partaker” (METACHOS) was used in the general sense of one who shares with someone as an associate in an enterprise or undertaking.”

But in this context it is clear that the sharing was not in regards to an enterprise or an undertaking but rather in regards to the very life of Christ Himself (Colossians 3:4).

So who is a “partaker of Christ?” A “partaker of Christ” is someone who shares in the very life of Christ.

So again why did this author exhort his readers in the way that he had exhorted them in **Hebrews 3:12-13**? He exhorted His readers in the way that he exhorted his readers because he knew that **“if he”** or **“if they”** did not persevere, in the way that he was describing it to them they should not assume that they were **“partakers of Christ”** or in other words **“sharers in the very life of Christ.”**

So is it a big deal for a professing believer to know whether or not they are a “partaker of Christ” or in other words “a sharer in the very life of Christ?” Absolutely! For only those who are **“partakers of Christ”** or in other words who are **“sharers in the very life of Christ”** have life. And why would I say this?

Let me read for you **Ephesians 2:1-5**. In these verses the Apostle Paul addressed the Ephesian Church and this is what he told them. **“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, (2) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. (3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.”** So based on these verses can we say that only the partakers of Christ or in other words sharers in the life of Christ have life? And what is the answer? The answer is absolutely!

Only those who are partakers of Christ or in other words only those who are sharers in the life of Christ have life! And what about all the others or in other words all those others, who have not become partakers of Christ or in other words sharers in the life of Christ? They obviously do not have life and therefore they are still dead in their trespasses and sins, separated from God the Father forever without hope.

But for those who have become partakers of Christ or in other words “sharers in the life of Christ” they have hope. What does **Colossians 3:4** tell us? **“When Christ, who is our life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”**

So is being a partaker of Christ and sharer in the life of Christ a big deal? Absolutely! There is nothing of greater importance than this both in this life and the life to come.

So can we assume that we have become a partaker of Christ just because we say we have? And what is the answer? The answer is no.

If we say that we have become a partaker of Christ we must persevere and not just passively persevere or in other words not just sitting around thinking that we are persevering because we have not denied Christ and His work on the cross. The perseverance that the author is speaking of here is not passive perseverance; it is an active perseverance. And why can I say this?

Based on the word **“for”** at the beginning of **verse 14**, the readers were exhorted in the way they were exhorted in **verses 12-13** and this is why the author went on at the end of **verse 14** to define for the readers the kind of perseverance that he expected from them if they were actually going to be able to confirm that they in fact had become **“partakers of Christ.”**

So now let us consider the kind of active perseverance that they would need to confirm that they were in fact a **“partaker of Christ.”** So now let us once again read **Hebrews 3:14**. And what does it say? **“For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”** So based on **Hebrews 3:14** how will we know if we are a **“partaker of Christ?”**

Based on Hebrews 3:14 we will know that we have become a partaker of Christ “if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”

So, what is the meaning of this phrase, **“if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end?”**

We will begin by looking at the **phrase “the beginning of our assurance.”** So, what does this phrase mean? The “beginning of our assurance” referred to the assurance that both the author and his readers enjoyed when they transferred their trust from themselves to Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. This is how we should understand this phrase.

And doesn't this make total sense? If we are going to find assurance we will never be able to find assurance by trusting in ourselves, for we are terribly flawed and this is the reason why when we heard the gospel of Christ and understood who Christ was and what He had done for us through His death on Calvary that so many of us here this morning were so willing to transfer our trust from ourselves to Him. We did so because we really truly believed that through faith in Christ that we could be delivered from sin and all of its consequences.

And so what did that belief lead to, as we acted upon it, by transferring our trust from ourselves to Christ alone for our salvation? Assurance! We truly believed that we were saved and that we had entered into a personal relationship with God through Christ.

So, what did the author want both he and his readers to do with **the "beginning of their assurance?"** The author wanted both he and his readers to hold fast the beginning of their assurance firm until the end or in other words we could say it this way. The author wanted his readers not to take their initial assurance for granted but rather to actively persevere in the pursuit of it.

So, what specifically would the author have had in mind in terms of how he might have wanted them to do this?

At a very minimum the author would have expected them to honor the exhortations that he had given them in **Hebrews 3:12-13** and to continue to honor those exhortations to the very end of their lives.

So based on **Hebrews 3:12** what would his expectation have been? He would have expected his readers until the very end of their lives to be **"taking care that there not be in any one of them an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God"** or in other words he would have expected them, until the very end of their lives, to be making sure that they were continuously responding to the voice of God as He spoke to them through His word or even more specifically that they were making sure that they were continuously responding to the voice of God as He continued to speak to them through His Son and through His Son's gospel and all the truths related to that gospel.

If they were to take care to do this and they in fact found themselves to be continuously responding to the voice of God that would of course be very good for that would indicate that they were in fact taking this matter of holding fast the beginning of the assurance firm until the end very seriously or in other words the matter of their perseverance.

So now, based on **Hebrews 3:13**, what would the author's expectation have been? He would have expected his readers, until the very end of their lives **“to be encouraging one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’”** or in other words he would have expected them until the very end of their lives to remain closely knit together so that might within that context continue to exhort one another, plead with one another, and even if necessary beg one another to remain responsive to the voice of God so that might remain faithful to the gospel of Christ and all the truths related to that gospel.

These are several of the ways, at a minimum, that this author would have expected this group of struggling Hebrew believers to manifest their perseverance or in other words to holding **fast to** the beginning of their assurance **firm** until the end.

So in light of these minimum expectations, how are we doing? If we are doing well then let us rejoice for this would indicate that we are doing what would be expected from someone who is in fact a “partaker of Christ” and “sharer in His life” or in other words it would be indicating that we are doing what would be expected from a person who is indeed saved.

And is this something that should excite us? Absolutely! For there is nothing else in this world that is more important than being assured of our salvation.

May we by the grace of God hold fast the beginning of our assurance firmly until the end so that we through our perseverance might prove ourselves to be partakers of Christ.