

**Christ is Superior to Moses**  
**Hebrews 3:15-19**  
**Part Seven**

God speaks to us through the Word. What did Paul say to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:16**? **“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

Therefore, whether we are speaking Old Testament Scriptures or New Testament Scriptures we should know this: that God is speaking to us through His Scriptures.

So when we open up the Bible this morning and consider the passage that we will be studying this morning, will God be speaking to us? Yes!

If after we leave here this morning and again we open up our Bibles so that we might read from our Bibles, will God again be speaking to us? Yes!

Will God be speaking any time the Scriptures or any time the Bible is opened to us, either by ourselves or others? Yes!

God speaks through His Scriptures. What does **2 Timothy 3:16** tell us? **“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

So should this be an incentive for us to continually put ourselves in a position to interact with the Scriptures? Absolutely! God has promised us that if we listen to His voice when He speaks that there will be great blessings for us in this life and the life to come.

But now let me share this with you another truth from the Scriptures that we also must be very cognizant of, and what is that truth? If we as professing believers continuously put ourselves in a position to continuously interact with the Scriptures or in other words to hear the voice of God, but yet continuously refuse to hear what He has to say when He is speaking to us through His word, we could very easily suffer grave consequences both in this life and in the next.

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). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:1-6**. And why would the author of Hebrews have considered Christ to be superior to Moses as an example of faithfulness? It was because the author saw Christ, the Son of the living God, as the faithful builder and overseer of the house of Israel while he only saw Moses as a faithful representative and servant within that house. This is why the author of Hebrews considered Christ as an example of faithfulness to be superior to Moses and his example of faithfulness.

So after the author of 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 where did this warning section begin? This warning section began in **Hebrews 3:7** and will not end until **Hebrews 4:13**. Obviously this is a very long section of Scripture, which should emphasize for us the significance this author attached to this warning.

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, exhorted his readers in **verse 12** to take care that there not be in any one of them an evil, unbelieving heart. And secondly, he exhorted his readers in **verse 13** to encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today.

Both of these exhortations were meant by this author to promote perseverance, which the author believed was of vital importance for confirming whether for not a professing believer was a partaker of Christ or not a partaker of Christ. And how do we know this? This is how we know this:

After exhorting his readers in Hebrews 3:12-13, the author stressed the vital importance of perseverance for confirming whether or not a professing believer was in fact a "partaker of Christ" (Hebrews 3:14). We saw this in **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 based on this verse, is perseverance an option for someone who claims to be a partaker of Christ? No, perseverance is not an option for someone who claims to be a partaker of Christ. Perseverance is a necessary thing for someone who claims to be a partaker of Christ.

So, what kind of perseverance was this author talking about? Was he talking about a passive perseverance or an active perseverance? He was talking about an active perseverance. We see this in several ways. First of all, we see this in the author's exhortations that promoted perseverance in **Hebrews 3:12-13**, and secondly, we see this in the way the author described perseverance in **Hebrews 3:14** "as holding fast the beginning of their assurance firm until the end."

And this is where we left off. So where did the author go from here? After stressing the vital importance of perseverance the author once again reminded his readers of Israel's past failure in the wilderness and their subsequent judgment (Hebrews 3:15-19 cf. 3:7-11).

So let me now read for you **Hebrews 3:15-19** and see if this is not so. "While it is said, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.' (16) For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? (17) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? (19) So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief." So did the author, after stressing the vital importance of perseverance in **Hebrews 3:14**, then go on to once again remind his readers of Israel's past failure in the wilderness and subsequent judgment? Yes, this is exactly what he did.

And why did he do this? He did this so that he might highlight for his readers the severe consequences of not persevering.

So, what do I hope will happen as we once again revisit Israel's past failure in the wilderness and their subsequent judgment? My hope is that as we do this that we might be even more motivated to take his earlier exhortations in **Hebrews 3:12-13** to heart, so that we, in continuously taking those exhortations to heart, might reassure ourselves that we are in fact a "partaker of Christ" based on the statement in **Hebrews 3:14** concerning the vital importance of perseverance.

So now let us begin to examine **Hebrews 3:15**. So let us begin by reading **Hebrews 3:15**. “**While it is said, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.’**”

So having read this verse, what can we now say about this verse?

In Hebrews 3:15 the author ended the sentence that he had begun in Hebrews 3:12 by quoting the exhortation portion of the Psalm 95:7-8 which he had earlier quoted in Hebrews 3:7-8.

So why did the author choose to do this? The author chose to end the sentence that he had begun in verse 12 with the exhortation portion of Psalm 95:7-8 so that Hebrews 3:15 might serve as a summary of Hebrews 3:12-14.

In other words, when the author quoted the exhortation of portion of **Psalm 95:7-8** in **Hebrews 3:15** and declared to his readers “**Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me,**” he was essentially saying to his readers that they better not ignore what he just said in **verses 12-14** for what he had said to them was from God, and if they were to ignore what God was saying to them through him, they would in essence be choosing to not hear the voice of God and would therefore be very much in danger of having their hearts hardened, in very much the same way as when the nation of Israel had their hearts hardened while provoking God in the wilderness, which his readers of course knew resulted in some very grave consequences.

So after the author chose to quote the exhortation portion of **Psalm 95:7-8** to end the sentence that he had begun in **verse 12** and to also provide a summary statement of **verses 12-14** so that they might understand the importance of them taking the exhortations of he had given them in **Hebrews 3:12-13** seriously, what did the author do next?

After using Hebrews 3:15 to summarize what he had said in Hebrews 3:12-14, he then in Hebrews 3:16-18 chose to dissect Israel’s past failure and subsequent judgment using questions and answers. And he uses three sets of questions and answers to do this. The first set is in **verse 16**, the second set is in **verse 17**, and the third set is in **verse 18**.

So why would the author do this? Why did the author, after using **Hebrews 3:15** to summarize what he had said in **Hebrews 3:12-14**, then go on to dissect Israel past failure and subsequent judgment using questions and answers? The author wanted to highlight for his readers the grave consequences that came upon Israel for not having listened to the voice of God when He was speaking to them, and obviously this author felt that this stylistic approach of questions and answers was a particularly effective to get their attention and drive his point home to them.

So let us look at the first question answer set in **Verse 16**. So what is the question? **“For who provoked Him when they had heard? And what was the author’s answer to that question? “Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?”**

So, what was the author’s point in asking this question and giving this answer? Coming out of Egypt with hope and great expectations under the leadership of Moses did not prevent the whole of the nation of Israel from provoking God when they, because of unbelief, refused to listen to God when He, through His servant Moses, told them to go into the Promised Land. This refusal and God’s subsequent upset is spelled out for us in great detail in **Numbers 14-15**.

So did their refusal to listen to the voice of God to go into the Promised Land have consequences? Yes, absolutely. This specific refusal and their subsequent obstinacy continued to fuel the anger of God toward them throughout their 40 years in the wilderness until all of them who had sinned in this way had died in that wilderness.

And we see this in **verse 17**. So, what was the question in **verse 17**? **“And with whom was He angry for forty years? And what was the author’s answer to this question? “Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?”**

So did their refusal to listen to the voice of God to go into the Promised Land have consequences? Yes, absolutely. This specific refusal and their subsequent obstinacy continued to fuel the anger of God toward them throughout their 40 years in the wilderness until all of them who had sinned in this way had died in that wilderness.

But this was not the only consequence. There was still another consequence of their refusal to listen to the voice of God when He asked them to go into the Promised Land.

Not only did they suffer the anger of God in that wilderness that culminated in their deaths, they also, because of their deaths in the wilderness, never entered into the Promised Land.

And we see this is **verse 18**. So, what was the question and the answer in **verse 18**? **“And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?”**

So were there serious consequences for the nation of Israel when their hearts had become hardened to the voice of God while in the wilderness? Absolutely!

So, what was the ultimate cause of all of this? Let us read **Hebrews 3:19**. **“So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.”** They never truly believed, in spite of all that they had seen as they were delivered from Egypt, that God could provide for them what He had promised.

So now let me ask you this question. Could we be in the same danger? Of course we could! Any time we are hearing the Word of God and we choose not to believe, whether we want to admit it or not, we are in danger of going down the same path as Israel.

So, what can we do about this danger? God has already in **Hebrews 3:12-14** been speaking to us about this. So, what has He been saying to us?

**“Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.”** Or in words, let us be careful that we do not have a heart that is unresponsive to the voice of God. Or in other words, let us be careful that we do not have a heart that is unresponsive to the Word of God. For if we have such a heart, it is not a good heart, it is a bad heart, it is an unredeemed heart, it is an unsaved heart. It is an evil, unbelieving heart.

And what else has He been saying to us in **Hebrews 3:13**. **“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’ so that**

**none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”** Or in other words, in light of the importance of listening to the voice of God, let us encourage one another, let us exhort one another, and if necessary let us even beg one another to listen to His voice.

God is telling us that we need to help each other to listen to His voice. And what will this require of us? It will require us to be interacting with other believers, which hopefully we are all seeking to do. And what are we to be doing as we are interacting with believers? We are to be encouraging one another to listen to the voice of God.

And why is this all so very important? The author has been telling us why this is important in **Hebrews 3:14**. And what has He been saying to us? **“For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”**

God speaks to us through the Word. What did Paul say to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:16**? **“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

So if we continuously choose to hear what God is saying to us when He speaks to us through His word, then will be blessed? Yes, our perseverance in this matter will confirm for us that we are holding fast to the beginning of our assurance and doing so with the intent to hold it firmly until the end, but it will also confirm for us, as a by-product, that we are in fact a partaker of Christ.

But if we do not continuously choose to hear what God is saying to us when He speaks to us through His Word, none of this will be true. In fact, it should disturb us and cause us to change our way

May God through His grace continually give us the faith to respond to His voice so that we would not suffer the fate of Israel but would rather through perseverance prove ourselves to be partakers of Christ.