

➤ Read Hebrews 3:1–19.

The writer of Hebrews has proven Jesus to be greater than the prophets and the angels. Now he sets out to prove that Jesus is greater even than Moses, who was “regarded by the Jews as the greatest of men.”¹

➤ Reread Hebrews 3:1–6.

1. Note how the author of Hebrews addresses the recipients of this letter in verse 1. What do you think is the significance of each part of this address?

Holy (2:11; Col. 1:21–22)


Brothers and sisters (2:11)


2. The author exhorts us to fix our thoughts on Jesus (v. 1). What two particular roles of Jesus does he highlight for us to consider? (v. 1)
3. The Greek word translated as “house” in verses 2 and 5–6 is to be understood not as a literal dwelling place, but rather as “the household, the people, not the building.”³
 - a. Whose household is this? (vv. 2, 5–6)

Apostle and High Priest

“When Jesus is designated as ‘the Apostle and High Priest of our confession’, He is marked out as **both God’s representative among men and men’s representative in the presence of God**. The Old Testament writings tell the story of God’s self-revelation to man and man’s response to that revelation; in both respects these writings find their fulfillment in Jesus. For He is not only, as has been emphasized already, the one in whom God has revealed Himself finally and completely, but also the perfect embodiment of man’s obedient response to God.”² (emphasis added)

- b. What did God have to say about Moses that showed he was unique among all the prophets of Israel? (Num. 12:1–8)

- c. Though both men are credited as being “faithful” (v. 2), what argument does the writer make to show that Jesus is “worthy of greater honor” (v. 3) than even Moses? (vv. 3–6; * Lk. 3:22, 9:35; 1 Jn. 5:9)

- d. How do we become members of this household? (v. 6; Jn. 1:12;  Eph. 2:19–20)

- 4. The last phrase of verse 6 reads differently in different translations: “our boasting in our hope” (ESV) and “the hope in which we glory” (NIV). What do we learn about that hope from the following passages?
Rom. 5:1–2

Rom. 8:18–25; 28–30

1 Pet. 1:3–9

➤ Read Hebrews 3:7–19.

5. Verses 7b–11 are a quotation from Psalm 95.
 - a. Who does verse 7a say is speaking in this psalm?
 - b. Why was the admonition not to harden their hearts so necessary for the original readers of Hebrews? (Consider Ps. 106:7–33.)

- c. The writer twice quotes this verse in our passage:

Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion. (vv. 7b–8a, 15)

Note that these verses make it clear that it is possible to hear his voice and still harden our hearts. How does 2 Thessalonians 2:15 encourage us to keep this from happening?

6. As in verse 1, verse 12 addresses believers as “brothers and sisters” in the household of God. With the affection of siblings, what are we to watch out for amongst our church family? (vv. 12–13)

“The picture [in verse 13]... is that we are to come alongside one another daily, exhorting one another in the practice of Christian faith.... So if we do not know the nature of our fellow believers’ struggles, and we do not share ours with them, then we will never be able to follow through with this command. The result, in that case, will be that people among us will fall prey to sin.”⁴

7. How often are we to exhort and encourage one another? (v. 13; 10:23–25)

8. Think back over the course of your faith and write down the times when a fellow believer called you back to faithfulness and encouraged you to obey.

Pray for wisdom and courage in calling others back to faith and obedience, and for the humility to hear when others do this for you.

9. The last verses of chapter 3 end on a somber note. The readers are reminded that those who failed to enter God's rest in the Promised Land were the same ones who experienced God's mighty and miraculous deliverance from Egypt. Christians have experienced an even greater and more miraculous deliverance, having "crossed over from death to life" (Jn. 5:24). What kept the Israelites from the Promised Land and has the potential of keeping us from entering into the rest God offers us? (v. 19)

10. Consider some of the exhortations from this chapter listed below. Pray and ask Jesus, your Apostle and High Priest, to help you especially during times of trial, suffering and trouble to...

- fix your thoughts on Jesus (v. 1)
- hold firmly to your confidence and the hope in which you glory (v. 6)
- not harden your heart (v. 8)
- not have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God (v. 12)

*📖 For further study

¹ Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol.12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 31.

² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews. Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2006), 11.