

Christ Is Superior to Moses

“Consider”

Hebrews 3:1-4:13

This portion of the book of Hebrews is both challenging and familiar. There are more quotes here from the Old Testament that factor into its interpretation and a very encouraging text for the believer today based upon those Old Testament portions.

We have seen in the first two chapters that Christ is superior to the Old Testament prophets (1:1-3) and to the angels (1:4-2:18). This portion builds on the truths found in those first chapters and further develops that there is nothing in all of creation that can compare to our Saviour. We can see that in the word “consider” in verse one. There are several things we need to give close attention to, to pay careful consideration of in this text. Throughout this portion are found terms that are given to cause us to pause and consider what’s either just been said or what is about to be said.

In the introduction of this portion, there are two things to note: “holy brethren” and “partakers of the heavenly calling.” The phrase “holy brethren” points back to Heb. 2:11-12 where the author is speaking of the spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ. Looking at the fact that this letter was addressed to believing Jews, they would have understood the implications, and the addition of the adjective “holy” in our text would make it clear that it wasn’t just Jewish believers in mind, but all believers, whether Jew or Gentile. The phrase “partakers of the heavenly calling” confirms this. The calling they had to serve the Lord was not because they were Jews but because they were believers. It’s called a “heavenly calling” in contrast with the earthly calling that the Israelites had historically as a people – the inheritance of the Promised Land. I believe it’s given as “heavenly” to include all believers.

I. "CONSIDER" CHRIST JESUS – 3:1-6

A. Christ is greater than Moses – vs. 1

1. "The Apostle...of our profession"

- a) Although Moses was never called one, in the simplest definition of the word for "apostle" meaning "a sent one," and the fact that it was a title used for official ambassadors, Moses can be considered an "apostle" from God sent to Pharaoh to deliver His people from bondage.
- b) Jesus Christ was a greater "Apostle" than Moses – He's the "sent One" from God to man (as found in chapter two) to provide a common faith for all to believe ("profession" – to agree, to say the same or be the same or similar). He didn't come (the first time) to deliver His people from the bondage of Rome (as Moses did in Egypt), He came to deliver all of mankind from the bondage of sin and death.

John 10:36

³⁶ Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

John 20:21

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

2. The "High Priest of our profession"

- a) Moses may be a type of an apostle but he was not a priest at all, much less a high priest. Moses was a prophet but not a priest.
- b) Christ is both a Prophet (Acts 3:22; 7:37) and High Priest. We will look at this office in chapter five, so we won't dwell on this here.

Acts 3:22–23 [quoting from Deut. 18:15-19]

²² For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. ²³ And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Acts 7:37

³⁷ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

B. Because the Builder is greater than the building – vs. 2-4, 6b

1. Vs. 2 – both Moses and Jesus Christ were faithful in what they were given to do, but the work Christ was “appointed” to do was of far greater value and significance than that of Moses. Moses was appointed to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, to guide them to the Promised Land, and was given the Law by which they were to live. Christ came to fulfill that law and provide redemption for all mankind.

Numbers 12:7–8

⁷ My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. ⁸ With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

2. Vs. 3-4 – Christ is said to be “counted worthy of more glory than Moses” because He is the One who built the house – Moses was just a steward of it. In other words, the people of Israel, the house of Israel, was

God's and since Jesus is God, they were His. Moses was one of them, not the builder of them – He was the faithful steward of the house (more on this point later).

3. The term “house” (οἶκος) is one that refers to the people in the house (household) and not just the structure in which they reside. The term “church” is the same. The “church” is not the building in which we meet, it is the people inside the building. Even though this letter was written to believing Jews, it is written to those within the church of God, and includes all members of that church, of that “house.”
4. The latter part of verse six makes the connection between the “house” and the “church.” It makes clear that it's not speaking of a building or structure but speaks of the people.
 - a) “Whose house are we” – people
 - b) “If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” – even though this is a conditional statement, it isn't saying we can lose what we have in Christ if we are anchored in Him. It's simply stating that those that are truly born again and are part of the “household of faith” will remain “firm unto the end.” That is not to say that we won't sin, but it does mean that we are “holding fast.” “The meaning is simply that continuance is the proof of reality. We can tell if we are really the house of God because we stay there. The one who falls away never belonged in the first place” (MacArthur).

[1 John 2:19](#)

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all

of us.

- (1) “Hold fast the confidence...firm unto the end” – the word for “confidence” (παρρησία) literally means the act of speaking all. It’s often translated “boldness” and is focused on the boldness to speak about our faith. One way to know if someone is truly born again is if they are ready and willing to speak out what they say they believe.

[Acts 4:29–31](#)

²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

[1 Peter 3:15](#)

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

- (2) “Hold fast...the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” – this word for “rejoicing” (καύχημα) means to boast, and its use here is the result of boasting (the result of our “confidence”). Another way to see the faith of a true believer is to hear them rejoice in that faith.
5. There is a text in Ephesians 2:19-22 that sheds light on the issue of the “house,” or the church of God.
 - a) The church’s (“house”) foundation – vs. 19-20

- (1) The Word of God – “built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.”
- (2) Jesus Christ – the basis of all things – “chief cornerstone.”

b) The church’s function – vs. 21

- (1) It is to be “fitly framed together” - As long as the church is in existence on this earth it is ever growing, ever learning, and fitting tighter and tighter together. The tighter, more fitly joined it is the less likely it is to succumb under pressure of the Devil and his forces.

Ephesians 4:15–16

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

- (2) It is to grow – “growth”

We, as a church body – “building” – are to be ever growing, ever increasing in spiritualness, striving to grow more “fit” every day.

Colossians 1:10

¹⁰ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1 Peter 2:2

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

(3) It is to be “an holy temple”

The word used here for "temple" is referring to the inner sanctuary of the temple, or tabernacle, not the whole structure. It is the Holy Place of our heart and life in which God wants to dwell, not in the worldly, sinful nature of man. It is that part of man that needs to be holy – set apart for God's use. If the inner sanctuary of our life is pure, and holy, then the natural, sinful flesh will not be so susceptible to the devil's temptations. Not that we will not sin, but the Bible says that what's on the inside will be seen on the outside.

1 Corinthians 3:16–17

¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

(4) It is to function “in the Lord” – using Him as our guide.

If this point is not adhered to then the others will not matter, for Jesus, our Lord, is the Chief Cornerstone of the church, and if He is not put in the forefront of our individual lives and put in the forefront of the church business then our foundation is insecure and WE WILL FALL.

More than a hundred years ago D. L.

Moody lashed out as a loving critic to certain parts of the church of his time for its misappropriation of energies. The church reminded him, he said, of firemen straightening pictures on the wall of a burning house. In a single sentence he drew a vivid picture of what any of us can become in any generation when we forget the basic activities given to us by the Lord of the church.

c) The church's fortune – vs. 22

We find in this verse the words "are builded together." These words are referring to the church as being continually put together out of several things to make a whole. In other words, every church is to strive to win the lost so that it can continue to "build together" out of a sinful life another part of the whole. The fortune, or treasure, of this is the way in which it is given to accomplish its mission, or function.

C. And because a Son is greater than a servant – vs. 5-6

1. Verse five refers to the faithfulness of Moses as a servant in "all his house" – in his position as the one to lead Israel out of the Egypt and to the Promised Land, Moses was a very great servant, but that's what he was. He was a testimony, a type of what was to come, or more specifically, Who was to come.

a) The word for "servant" here is not the normal one that would be found here in the original language. This is the only time in the New Testament this word is used and "it denotes a faithful friend to a superior, who solicitously regards the superior's interest or looks after his affairs. One who serves willingly regardless of whether he is a free man impelled by

love or a slave bound by duty” (Zodhiates).

- b) Even though Moses was that kind of faithful servant, he was still a servant – he did not have the same privileges and authority a son would have.

Deuteronomy 18:15–19

¹⁵ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ¹⁶ According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. ¹⁷ And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. ¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

- 2. The first part of verse six makes the connection and the point clear: “But Christ as a son over his own house.”

Moses was the leader of the people of God, but they were God’s people. Christ as the Son of God is not just the Leader of God’s people, we ARE His people.

Conclusion to this point: We need to “consider” Christ in all we do and all we have. Being greater than Moses, one of the most revered men in the Bible, a tremendous example for us to follow, especially when it comes to be a faithful servant of God, is meant to help us want to serve Him as well.

Being greater than the “building” is to show that we are part of the “house” (household) of God and working together we can see great things done for the Lord today because He is the builder and that’s His plan.

As the Son of God, He is greater than any servant, and that should also encourage us to greater service to please Him.

My father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad I know,
He maketh no mistake.

My cherished plans may go awry,
My hopes may fade away.
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.

Tho' night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break;
I'll pin my faith, my all in Him,
He maketh no mistake.

There's so much now I can not see,
My eyesight's far too dim;
But come what may, I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.

For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make,
Through all the way, tho' dark to me,

He made not one mistake.

- By A. H. Overton

II. “CONSIDER” TIME – 3:7-19

The first word of verse seven connects what follows with what was just said, specifically at the end of verse six. In the phrase “whose house are we” in verse six, there is a very clear application to be made for the church being that “house.” Whether this letter that is called the book of Hebrews was written or, as some believe, was preached to an actual body of believers in a church or not is unknown, but we can clearly apply it to the church as a body of believers, as the “household” of God because the context indicates that to be the case.

In the first six verses, we were given the directive to “consider” Christ in all His work and glory. With that in mind, we come to this second section of this portion on Christ being superior to Moses and are given the principle of considering time as it relates to Christ. We’ll see an account of time past – history – in the first five verses and a consideration of time present as history is connected with the present in verses 12-19. As Winston Churchill made famous: “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

A. Time past in history – vs. 7-11

This is a quote from Psalm 95:7-11 (read the whole psalm for context).

1. Every Jew that would read this part of the letter to the Hebrews, or would hear it read, would have immediately been taken back to the historical record of the wilderness wandering and the text in Psalm 95 that summarizes that period in their history.

2. There's a very important point made in verse seven that might normally be overlooked: "as the Holy Ghost saith..." In the next chapter, we find that this psalm is again referenced and is attributed to David (4:7). This proves that David wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

Mark 12:36

³⁶ For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Acts 1:16

¹⁶ Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Acts 28:25

²⁵ And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

2 Peter 1:21

²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

3. As we consider history with the intent to learn from it, we find in Psalm 95 lessons for us today on what our attitude ought to be toward the Lord. It's an attitude that should come from our love for Him and because of our fear of Him.
 - a) Our attitude is to be one of joy because of who He is and what He's done – vs. 1-5.
 - (1) Joy because of salvation – vs. 1.

- (2) Joy because of the many blessings He has given to us – vs. 2.
 - (3) Joy because our God is the God of all and greater than all – vs. 3.
 - (4) Joy because of creation and what it means to us – vs. 4-5.
- b) Our attitude is to be one of humbleness because of who we are compared to who He is – vs. 6-7a.

- (1) Humbleness because we're the clay and He's the potter – vs. 6.

Isaiah 64:8

⁸ But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

- (2) Humbleness because we're the sheep and He's the shepherd – vs. 7a.

John 10:1-4

¹ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

- c) Our attitude ought to be one of brokenness because of what our sin cost our Saviour – vs. 7b-11.

- (1) Broken because we've hardened our heart to the

(2) Broken simply because of sin – vs. 10-11

B. Time present in our heart – vs. 12

1. Because of the historical account of what caused the wilderness wandering for the Israelites in the Old Testament, the author of Hebrews warns those that received this letter to “take heed...lest there be in any of you” – in any among the believers in the church(es) that received this letter that were mere professors of Christ rather than possessors of Him through faith.
2. “Wherefore (vs. 7)...take heed” – the form of this verb (present imperative involving durative action) gives the idea here of “be seeing to it constantly, keep a watchful eye ever open” (Wuest). The warning is to be considered at all times, not just occasionally or when it seems to be needed. We need to be ever aware of the danger of some turning away from the truth and warn them of the consequences of so doing.
3. “Lest there be in any of you” – the construction of this phrase is such as to point to the fact that there wasn't just a fear that this *could* happen but that it was *likely* to happen.
4. “An evil heart of unbelief”
 - a) The word for “evil” here (πονηρός) is not the normal one translated “evil” but one that is a much stronger word. To show this, when Satan is called the “wicked one” (four times in the book of First John alone) it is this word for “evil” that is used.

“This evil heart of unbelief of which the writer speaks, and which he suspects is found in some of his readers, is a heart in which the evil of unbelief is present, not in a passive or latent state, but in an active, pernicious condition. The attitude of these Hebrews toward the New Testament was not one now of a passive neglect, but one of an active opposition, which attitude the writer was afraid would result in a deliberate and final rejection of the New Testament. We must be careful to discriminate here between a heart in which unbelief is present, and an unbelieving heart. The first may be true of a Christian, but not the second. The latter expression refers to a heart solely and entirely controlled by unbelief, in which there is no faith whatever. These Jews to whom this warning was issued, were not saved as our historical background and analysis have shown. They had merely given an intellectual assent to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth and to the New Testament.” (Wuest)

- b) This evil heart that was suspected of being present was such as would be used to lead others astray from following the truth of Christ as superior to all else. It very well could be that those referenced here were leaders among the people: false prophets or wolves in sheep’s clothing.

2 Peter 2:1

¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1 John 4:1

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Matthew 7:15

¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Acts 20:29

²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

5. "In departing from the living God" – ἀπίστημι – our word "apostasy" is derived from this word. Literally translated, it means to stand off from. This is exactly what they were doing – standing off from the living God.

"Apostasy is defined as the act of someone who has previously subscribed to a certain belief, and who now renounces his former professed belief in favor of some other which is diametrically opposed to what he believed before. In other words, his new belief is not merely a new system of faith, but one which at every point negates his former belief. These Jews, should they renounce their professed faith in the New Testament system and go back to the First Testament sacrifices, would be embracing that which if brought in again would negate the New Testament. It was a question of the Levitical sacrifices or the crucified Messiah. In making a profession of Messiah as High Priest and then renouncing that professed faith to return to a dependence upon the sacrifices which God set aside at the Cross, the person would commit the sin called apostasy." (Wuest)

C. Time present in holding fast – vs. 14

1. This goes back to verse six and reiterates what is taught there about the evidence of one's salvation.
2. For review, this is what was given last week on verse six:

Even though this is a conditional statement, it isn't saying we can lose what we have in Christ if we are anchored in Him ("made partakers of Christ"). It's simply stating that those that are truly born again and are part of the "household of faith" will remain "firm unto the end." They won't be a traitor to their faith. That is not to say that we won't sin, but it does mean that we are "holding fast." "The meaning is simply that continuance is the proof of reality. We can tell if we are really the house of God because we stay there. The one who falls away never belonged in the first place" (MacArthur).

D. Time present in hardness – vs. 13, 15-19

1. Vs. 13 – we, as fellow believers, have a responsibility to each other in exhorting one another "daily" to stay true, to "hold fast" "lest any of you be hardened..." I believe this is speaking of believers.
 - a) "But" – this connects with verse twelve and stands in contrast to those that may have an evil heart of unbelief and depart from the living God. If we are going to avoid those pitfalls, we will need keep ourselves walking with the Lord and we will need to help others in the "house" (household) of God.
 - b) "Exhort one another daily" – they were to encourage one another even to the point of begging them to not return to the sacrifices of the Old Testament but to remain firm in their faith in Christ and His work of redemption and sacrifice.

The use of the word "daily" shows the urgency of the exhortation – we should never stop doing this.

- c) "While it is called To day" – simply, while we have breath and opportunity.

- d) “Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” – as stated already, I believe this is speaking of true believer, not just professing but possessing Christ. It shows the burden we should have for one another to be involved in their lives enough to be able to encourage them and help them stay true to the faith and not get hardened (stubborn, not willing to accept advice to do right) against it because of sin.

Romans 7:11

¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Ephesians 4:22

²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

James 1:14–16

¹⁴ But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵ Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. ¹⁶ Do not err, my beloved brethren.

2. Vs. 15-19 speaks of those that chose to not believe in the God of Moses and rejected Him for their own selfish, sinful desires.
- a) Verse fifteen restates portions of verses seven and eight to bring the focus back to the reason why those Israelites didn’t enter the Promised Land (the “rest” spoken of in verse eighteen).
- b) These verses lead into the next chapter and further expound on the subject of “rest.”

Conclusion to this point: What have learned from the past when

it comes to the history of God's people? Two-thirds of the Bible is Old Testament – you might say that it's two-thirds historical in measure. It's there for our learning, for our example, and as such much of its teaching is negative, showing what happens when God's Word and will is not followed.

The same thing can and does happen in the present – it's not just relegated to the past. We must consider those times of the past as an example of not repeating their mistakes in the present.

In Sherman's march from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and from Atlanta to the sea, the Confederate government, impatient with the Fabian tactics of General Joseph E. Johnston, removed him from command and gave his army to the impetuous General Hood. Hood at once marched to the rear of Sherman, threatening his communications and base of supplies at Chattanooga and Nashville.

An important link to these communications was Allatoona, which commanded the pass through the mountains. This post was at once attacked by Hood's army. Sherman sent an order to one of his lieutenants, Corse, to proceed to Allatoona. He himself went back as far as Kenesaw Mountain, and, from that eminence on the clear October day, could see plainly the smoke of the battle and hear the faint reverberation of the cannon. His flag officer at length made out the letters which were being wigwagged from the garrison at Allatoona. "Corse is here." This was a great relief to Sherman, who then heliographed his famous message "Hold the fort, I am coming."

Among the soldiers in Sherman's army was a young officer, Major Whittle who related the incident to P. B. Bliss, the famous evangelist. Taking this incident in the campaign for his inspiration, Bliss wrote the once well-known hymn "Hold the Fort, For I Am Coming!"

The hymn, thus inspired, has genuine Christian truth in its lines. The Church is to occupy until Christ comes. It is assailed and besieged

by the world and by the enemies of the truth, but Christ has not left it without a promise -- a promise which means deliverance and victory. From the ramparts of heaven, He waves to us the message that he is coming. Confident in that great appearance, the Church will occupy till He comes.

III. "CONSIDER" REST – 4:1-13

There is no break between chapters three and four – they are all part of the same paragraph, beginning with verse seven of chapter three and continuing through verse thirteen of chapter four. This is important because it helps us understand these verses in their proper setting.

There are thirteen Greek words translated by the English word "rest." They range in meaning from "being laid to rest" to stopping work to being at peace, etc. The word used in Hebrews three and four (and it's only found in these two chapters in the Bible) means, in its simplest understanding, to cease from labor, to cease from work.

God rested from His work but not because He was tired – it is to show He finished the work completely and there is no more work. It was also to show that we are given six days to work and one to rest – physically.

He set the type for us in the "rest" spoken of in this text. The "work" we thought needed done for salvation was completed by Christ on the cross and putting our faith in that work means we can rest from anything that we would need to do. There is an aspect of peace involved here (one of the Greek words translated "rest" in Acts 9:31 is the vast majority of the time translated "peace") that will help us understand the use of the term "rest."

A. Made possible because of faith – vs. 1-8

1. The promise of rest still remains – vs. 1, 7-8

a) “Let us therefore fear” – vs. 1a – this goes back to the last three verses of chapter three and takes into consideration the many that chose to follow the bad report of the ten spies. There is a two-fold application here.

(1) To those that have heard the gospel and haven’t put their faith in Christ because of it, there is a warning that they do so “lest they come short of it” (the rest to those in Christ).

(2) To those that are saved by the grace of God (the “us”), the warning is that we don’t neglect that salvation because of the cares of this world and we become of no use to the Lord.

“Here a fear is commended to us, not such as to shake the certainty of faith, but to instill so much anxiety that we do not become numb in security. We must fear, therefore, not because we ought to be alarmed or distrustful, as if we were uncertain of the outcome, but lest we abandon the grace of God.” (Calvin)

Philippians 2:12

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

b) “Lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest” – vs. 1b

(1) The type of fear under consideration here is that which will draw both the lost to realize their need of a Savior as well as the believer to know that their faith has brought them into that rest spoken of in these verses.

(2) “A promise being left us” – this is not to be seen

as something neglected but something that is still remaining. It can be understood as “a promise being left to us still,” or “a promise that still remains,” and that will remain until the last person that needs redemption.

- c) “Of entering into his rest” – vs. 1c – this is the promise that salvation brings: a rest from the labors of fighting against the grace of God and of fighting against the pull of the devil to keep us from accepting that grace.
 - d) Verse seven goes back to chapter three and the quote from Psalm 95 to emphasize the point that the promise of rest was still available to anyone who would receive the gospel message.
- (1) “Again, he limiteth a certain day” – that is God as the author of Scripture, fixed a day, as it were, for entrance into His rest, and that day is “to day.” Whenever “today” is, from the time the promise was given, going back to the seventh day of creation when God rested from all the work He had done as a type of the rest with Him that has been made available, to literally right now, today, and every day from here until the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:1–2

¹ We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

² (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

- (2) “Saying in David, To day, after so long a time” – two thousand five hundred years from the time of creation and the day of rest that God instituted as a type of the rest we have in Christ, and five

hundred years from that point which is the time of Moses and Joshua and the entrance into the Promised Land, to the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, and for all time following.

- (3) “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” – this is still the plea today from the message of the gospel.
- e) Verse eight is one of those very puzzling verses in the Bible.
- (1) Vs. 8a – The first challenge is the name of “Jesus” in the verse. The same issue is shown in Acts 7:45.

[Acts 7:44–46](#)

⁴⁴ Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. ⁴⁵ Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; ⁴⁶ Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

Compare that text with Joshu 3:6-7.

[Joshua 3:6–7](#)

⁶ And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. ⁷ And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

The cross-reference of Hebrews 4:8 is found in

Deuteronomy 31:3, 7-8.

Deuteronomy 31:3

³ The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

Deuteronomy 31:7–8

⁷ And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. ⁸ And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

So, the question is, if these two New Testament texts are clearly speaking of Joshua of the Old Testament, why does it read “Jesus”?

- (a) Simply put, because the King James translators translated the Greek word as literally as possible – and it translates to “Jesus” in its purest form. In Greek, it is Ἰησοῦς, which is spelled in English lettering, “JESUS.”

The Greek word for Jesus appears 977 times in the New Testament and every time it is translated as “Jesus.” It was a very common name and is basically a transliterated name from the Hebrew word for Joshua and Jehoshua.

- (b) The same thing can be found when the Greek is translated for the Old Testament

prophets Elijah and Isaiah. In the New Testament, it is Elias and Esaias respectively.

- (i) “Elias” – Ἠλίας – is used for Elijah in all thirty times his name appears. “Elijah” does not appear at all.
 - (ii) “Esaias” – Ἡσαΐας – is used for Isaiah in all twenty-one times his name appears. “Isaiah” does not appear at all.
- (c) The translators of the KJV could have made it clear who they were referring to (they did put Joshua in the marginal notes they made), but it wasn’t necessary because the context would have made it clear who it referred to.
- (d) All that said, it is not a wrong translation or a bad translation to use “Jesus” here because there is a direct type and antitype between Joshua of the Old Testament and Jesus, and in that relationship, the antitype (Jesus) in the place of the type (Joshua) did lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. That is one of the things that makes Joshua a type of Christ.

“[T]here is an agreement in their names, both signify a saviour, Joshua was a temporal saviour, Christ a spiritual one; and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into

Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest..." (Gill)

- (2) Vs. 8b – If Joshua had led them all into the Promised Land and none would have perished in the wilderness, "then would he not afterward have spoken of another day," that is, God would not have said in David's time (five hundred years after Joshua's day) that there was rest yet to come.

2. The promise of rest is still preached – vs. 2

This verse, as well as verse eight and the reference to "Jesus" (and Joshua) there fall under what is called "The Golden Rule of Interpretation" (I've given this before).

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."—Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965),

- a) This is a verse that I believe points to salvation being the same for Old Testament saints as well as New Testament saints: by grace through faith in the work of Christ on the cross and subsequent resurrection – the gospel.
- b) Going back to verse one and the reference to "a promise being left us" (still remaining today), the term "gospel" here is not just referencing the good news to the Israelites that there was a rest available

to them, but the message of the Redeemer must have been part of that message because of what the Bible says here.

The greater context of this whole portion of the book of Hebrews is clearly relating to the gospel message of Christ, and the rest He provided for us.

- c) “For unto us was the gospel preached” – the writer of the book of Hebrews includes himself here so it’s abundantly clear what he is referring to.
- d) “As well as unto them” – those in the wilderness that did not enter the Promised Land.
- e) “But the word preached”

(1) The term “preached” (ἀκοή) here is a word meaning to hear. It is transliterated in the English word “acoustic.” This is the same word translated “hearing” in Romans 10:16-17.

Romans 10:16–17

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? [Isaiah 53:1] ¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- (2) It is necessary that the gospel be preached and heard by the lost, but hearing isn’t enough if it is not acted upon.
- f) “Did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

There was no benefit to them, and there is no benefit to anyone today, if what they hear isn’t believed by faith.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

⁵ For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

3. The promise of rest is still to be believed – vs. 3-6

- a) This is another puzzling portion of this text and has been the cause of much debate and discussion and often is changed to fit what someone believes it should say rather than what it actually says.
- b) The first part of verse three is continuing on with the truths established in verse two on only those that believe by faith in the work of Christ will enter into the rest promised.
- c) The middle portion of verse three – “As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest” – is what gets a good deal of attention. Many of those that comment on this want to change it and treat it is simply a restatement of verse eleven where it quotes Psalm 95:11, “So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” Instead of considering it within the context around it, they just add “not” to it, which is a mistake. God swore those in unbelief would not enter in the text mentioned earlier. Here, He is speaking of those that believe that WILL enter in His rest. “As I have sworn in my wrath” – in the same statement spoken in His wrath to the unbeliever, He is speaking to the believer. Just as assuredly will those NOT enter that did not believe, those WILL enter that do believe.

- d) The last portion of verse three and verse four go all the way back to creation and the seventh day – the day of rest, as the establishment of the principle of resting in Him. As stated earlier, God didn't rest because He was tired, He rested as an example, so to speak, for us to rest from work (literally) as well as setting a type of everlasting rest.

“[A] rest not ending with the seventh day, but beginning then and still continuing, into which believers shall hereafter enter. God's rest is not a rest necessitated by fatigue, nor consisting in idleness, but is that upholding and governing of which creation was the beginning [Alford]. Hence Moses records the end of each of the first six days, but not of the seventh.”
(J-F-B)

Genesis 2:2

² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

- e) Verse five is a restatement of the passage in Psalm 95 we have reviewed, and points back to verse three to reiterate the point that faith is necessary “if they shall enter into my rest.”
- f) The first part of verse six goes back to the previous verses and restates the point that some will enter in because of their faith in the gospel message and some will not because of unbelief, the example again stated as being those Israelites who accepted the bad report and died in the wilderness.

B. Made permanent for the people of God – vs. 9-11

1. Rest remains available – vs. 9

- a) This points back to verse one and the promise of rest that still remains today because of the work of Christ

for mankind. This points back to verse six and the phrase “that some must enter therein.” The “people of God” of this verse are those “some” of verse six.

In some contexts of Scripture, especially the Old Testament, “the people of God” was speaking of the Israelites, as is Hebrews 11:25. However, here it’s speaking of the believers of the New Testament, whether Jew or Gentile.

Hebrews 11:25

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

1 Peter 2:9–10 [verse 10 is a quote from Hosea in the calling of the Gentiles]

⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
¹⁰ Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

b) The word for “rest” here is a different Greek word than what is used in the other verses in this text.

(1) This one – σαββατισμός – is where we get the English word “Sabbath.” In the Old Testament, the word is used for the rest one would do on the Sabbath Day according to the Levitical Law. In the New Testament, the word only appears here and is clearly speaking of the eternal rest with God that begins when we put our trust in Christ for salvation. “Therefore, the intimation is that the Sabbath was instituted as a symbol of that eternal rest at the completion of God's work” (Zodhiates). This goes back to verses three and four.

In essence, this "Sabbath rest" is not just for the future; it's for the present, offering us peace and assurance that we can live in freedom from the demands of the law and the fear of judgment. It's an invitation to cease from our own efforts to please God and find peace in His finished work.

- (2) The other word in our text – *κατάπαυσις* – we have defined before as one that means to cease from labor or work, as described in the next verse.

2. Rest returns benefits – vs. 10

- a) One benefit is that once our faith is secured in Christ, we no longer need to feel we need to work for salvation. The work has already been done by Christ.

In the context of the letter to the Hebrews, the "works" refer to the attempts to achieve righteousness or salvation by one's own efforts, specifically through the law or religious ritual. The message here is that entering God's rest means ceasing from trying to earn salvation and instead trusting in God's completed work through Christ.

- b) Another blessing we have in "the rest" spoken of here is that of an eternity free from the labor and stress of this life.

2 Thessalonians 1:6–7

⁶ Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

⁷ And to you who are troubled rest [liberty, to loose, be at ease] with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

Revelation 14:13 [speaks of Tribulation saints]

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord

from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

3. Rest removes doubt – vs. 11

- a) The first part of the verse shows that the “rest” spoken of in this context is that of the Christian life here on earth. Once we’ve entered, once we’re saved, it will take earnest diligence to stay faithful and obedient to Christ and His Word.

Matthew 11:28–30

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Philippians 2:12

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2 Peter 1:10–11

¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ¹¹ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

- b) The second part goes back to what we’ve seen throughout this context and that is that there are those that will doubt God and their faith in Him is not truly anchored in the work for their redemption. It’s in their own works (vs. 10) which they have not ceased from.

- c) The true rest spoken of throughout the text will remove the doubt and unbelief of who God is and what He has done for us.

In the context of this epistle, the audience to whom this was written, in part, were those Jews that had made a profession of faith in the Messiah but were now having doubts and weren't sure of their faith and were considering returning to Judaism and the Law. Being in "the rest" of God, for them in particular, would remove that question, that doubt, of who He was.

C. Made perfect (complete) through the Word of God – vs. 12-13

The immediate context is continuing to deal with those readers who are hesitant in trusting Christ completely so the Holy Spirit gives this verse as a reminder to them that the Word of God can bring to light what they truly believe.

The Word of God is:

1. Alive – "Quick" – the first word of this verse in Greek is this word, and it shows that the emphasis begins with the fact that the Word of God is alive and is used to bring knowledge of the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

James 1:18

¹⁸ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

2. Active – “powerful” – from a word (ἐνεργής) we get the word “energy.” Because it is alive, it has the power, the energy, the capability of doing what is stated here in this verse, as well as everything that is found within its pages.
3. Accurate – “sharper than any two-edged sword” – The word for “sharper” here is one that means to cut, and that, as is used in ancient Greek writings, to cut with precision, or accurately.
4. Affective – “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow”

“Affective” is an adjective form of the word “affect,” which is a verb meaning to act upon. “Affective” has to do with how something influences or is influenced by the emotional side of human experience.

- a) This is not to be viewed as the Word of God divides the soul and spirit but is a poetic way of pointing to the principle of Scripture that it pierces to the very depths of our being, to the very point where, if possible, the soul and spirit meet at a dividing point.

“Soul” and “spirit” are often used interchangeably, but here the writer seems to emphasize that God’s Word can discern the most subtle distinctions in a person’s inner being—between their thoughts,

motives, desires, and spiritual condition. It's a piercing revelation into both the conscious and subconscious aspects of life.

- b) By "the joints and marrow" is not meant that they are divided for they are not connected to each other. "The form of the expression is poetical, and signifies that the word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being as a sword cuts through the joints and marrow of the body" (Vincent).

5. Analytical – vs. 12c-13

- a) Vs. 12c – "Is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"
 - (1) "A discerner" – a word meaning a judge, able to discern or decide in an analytical manner; skilled in judging.
 - (2) The Word of God knows the innermost parts of who we really are – thoughts, motives, attitudes – and reveals them for what they truly are. That's not meant to condemn us but to cause conviction and refining to make us a better vessel fit for the Master's use.
- b) Vs. 13 – the omnipresence of God is demonstrated through the searching, the analytical measure of the Word of God.

Conclusion: This portion on Christ being superior to Moses concludes with the message of the power and presence of the Word of God in the life of the believer, and the importance it is that we remember that truth. Moses was a critical part of the Old Testament and the message of God to His people but compared to our Saviour he is just a servant doing what God wanted Him to do, as we should be.

Imagine a grand cathedral, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture, soaring into the heavens. Its intricate details, its stained-glass windows, its towering spires—all are a testament to the genius of its architect. This architect, with divine inspiration, conceived the blueprint, the grand design.

Now, picture the skilled craftsmen, the carpenters, who brought this vision to life. They toiled tirelessly, cutting and shaping the wood, assembling the framework, and adding the finishing touches. Without their labor, the cathedral would remain a mere blueprint, an idea on paper.

In the same way, Moses, the great lawgiver, was a faithful servant of God. He received the divine law, the Ten Commandments, and led the Israelites out of Egypt. He was a skilled craftsman, shaping the nation of Israel according to God's design.

However, as the author of Hebrews points out, Jesus Christ is far superior to Moses. He is not merely a skilled craftsman, but the divine Architect Himself. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the one who conceived the plan of salvation, and He is the one who brings it to completion.

Just as the cathedral stands as a testament to the architect's genius, so too does the Church stand as a testament to Christ's work. We are His masterpiece, His dwelling place. And as we enter into His rest, we experience the peace and joy that only He can provide.

We have seen in these two chapters the importance of faith and remaining spiritually vigilant. We are encouraged to trust in the promises of God, support one another, and embrace the spiritual rest that comes from a proper relationship with Christ.