

The Book of Hebrews
Churchwide Bible Study- Fall 2019
Hebrews 2-3 – Week 2

→ Review...

- The author of Hebrews (whoever he was) wrote this letter between 62-64 AD.
- His audience was Jewish Christians living either in Jerusalem or near by.
 - They were suffering intensifying persecution from their fellow Jews.
 - This evidently caused at least some of them to consider turning back to the Old Covenant sacrificial system, the Law of Moses in other words.
- Hebrews' author was exhorting his readers to not turn back to Judaism, for three main reasons:
 - The ceremonies of the Mosaic laws were only meant to be temporary and they were about to come to a violent end (culminating in 70 AD).
 - His readers would be caught up in God's judgment of their fellow Jews if they failed to endure and turned away from Christ and back to 1st century Judaism.
 - Turning away would be most heinous because Jesus is superior to the Mosaic system, both because of who He *is* and because of what He *has* done.
- As we saw, there are similarities to their situation and ours, which is why we need this message today...
- Chapters 1-2 (so far) taught us that Christ, as our world's Creator, Sustainer, and God, is superior to the angels who delivered the Old Covenant system to Israel.
 - Thus, the Gospel, New Covenant administration *He* brought into our world is superior to the Old Covenant delivered by angels.
 - Outright rejection of the New Covenant receives greater judgment than throwing off Old Covenant ever did.
- Finishing Hebrews 2 - 2:5-9 – Jesus rules the “age to come,” not angels...
 - V. 5ff – The angels will not rule the world to come either – the final new heavens and new earth...
 - God, according to Ps. 8, has always meant that for mankind...

- We don't see that yet.
- Vs. 9 – But we *do* see Jesus, the Ultimate Man, already reigning over all things.
 - His reign guarantees our own reign of all things in the future.
 - This proves yet again His superiority to angels, even in His human nature.
- 2:10-18 – Our World's Ruler is the Best Older Brother anyone can have...
 - God the Son became a human like us for two main reasons...
 - That He might die for our sins...
 - That He might help us when we're tempted, as He was tempted in the same way...
 - Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters.
 - Jesus stands ready to help us, particularly when we're tempted to give up.

→ Chapter 3 – Christ is Superior to Moses (plus a warning against falling away)

- 3:1 – Jesus: The Apostle and High Priest
 - Only verse in the New Testament that calls Jesus an Apostle...*THE* Apostle
 - The Son was officially *sent* to this world by the Father; He is the Father's official representative, ambassador to us.
 - Only a divine being could truly represent God in the world like this.
 - As a High Priest, Jesus represents *us* before God.
 - It is this Apostolic High Priest who is so superior to Moses, see vs. 2-6a.
- 3:2-6a – Christ: The Builder and Heir of God's House
 - The author is picking up on a scriptural theme: Namely that God has been building His people into a great "House"...
 - This "House" carries with it the notion of a *family*. God's House = God's Family

- But it also includes the idea of a *dwelling place*.
- God has prepared and is still preparing a people in which He can dwell forever.

John 14:23 - *Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

1 Corinthians 3:9 - *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.*

Revelation 21:3 - *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."*

1 Corinthians 15:28 - *When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.*

- This “Housing” project has been taking place since the fall, symbolized most clearly in the Old Covenant by the Tabernacle and Temple.
- Remember, Moses was once put in charge of God’s developing “House”. (3:2)
- But Christ is now in charge of God’s building project, in a way that gloriously outshines Moses’ administration of it. (3:3)
 - Because He is God (remember Heb. 1-2), He is the one actually *building* the house, while Moses himself was only *part of* The House. (3:4)
 - Moses served God’s house as a *servant*, Jesus builds His Father’s House as a *Son*...who has received The House as His inheritance.
- Clearly, Christ’s “set-up” of the House (the New Covenant) is superior to Moses’ older “set-up” of the House (the Old Covenant).
- 3:6b-14 – Warring Against Evil Hearts of Unbelief
 - The only people who remain *permanent* residents in Christ’s House are those who don’t give up their belief in the Lord, His Gospel, and His goodness.

- In vs. 7-11, the author, quoting Ps. 95, reminds his readers of what happened to a generation of Israelites who turned away from their confidence in what God has done and was doing for them.
 - Ps. 95 is speaking of the generation of Israelites led out of slavery in Egypt under Moses.
 - The particular incident being referred to is the incident with the water from the rock in Exodus 17:
 - This episode was the first in an endless stream of rebellious complaining and slanderous unbelief perpetrated by these folks.
 - God finally says He will endure no more and tells them none of them (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) will see the Promised Land.
- In verse 12, the author warns his readers to make sure they don't possess the same type of heart that the Exodus generation of Israelites had.
 - Their "falling away" would, of course, be their turning from Christ and the New Covenant and back to Moses and the Old Covenant.
 - To do this would be to turn from the living God Himself. After Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, the Father was no longer present in Old Covenant Judaism.
- Again, we need the same basic warning today.
 - Every one of us needs to take care that that we don't cultivate an evil heart of unbelief, one that turns away from the living God.
 - We need to consistently pray this prayer from Psalm 139:

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!
 - According to v. 13, we also need *each other* to keep our hearts faithful to God by mutually encouraging one another...
 - We must be intentional about this mutual encouragement!!

- Again, this is how we fight the development of an evil heart of unbelief, one that turns away from the living God.
 - V. 14 reminds us *why* such a fight is so important: Only those who fight it and endure will show themselves to have been true partakers of Christ!
- 3:14-19 – Remember *who* it was that fell away and God judged in the wilderness!
 - It was the generation of Exodus!
 - Still, they fell! Despite all they'd seen and experienced, they persisted in unbelief which led to their own demise.
 - If that generation wasn't immune to wickedly turning way from God, none of us are!
- Chapter 4 will continue to remind us just how high the stakes are, but it will also remind us how merciful our High Priest is, *particularly* when we're tempted and need him the most:

Hebrews 4:14-15 - ¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.