

**Heb. 3:1 ¶ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;**  
“Wherefore” – In light of the fact that Christ Jesus is greater than the angels and is now our High Priest.....

I think it is important to note that the writer is addressing “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,” Jewish believers who have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God as a guarantee of their eternal salvation. An excerpt from my journal in Ephesians follows.

**Eph. 1:13-14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

The Greek for *sealed* states, “to stamp for security or preservation.” Again, the fact that I am sealed with the Holy Spirit guarantees the security of my salvation. God (or His Spirit) never fails in what He does. That seal is a pledge of more to come, a divine assurance of good. The Greek for *earnest* reinforces that truth; it is defined as something “given in advance as security for the rest.” What is He an advance on? The eternal inheritance that we will receive as children of God.

The heavenly “calling” takes me back to my study in Romans; the Greek indicates that the word used here is a shortened form of the word used in Romans 8:30.

**Rom. 8:30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: and whom he **called**, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

The wording of verse 1 emphasizes the truth that the writer is directing his remarks to Jewish Christians—those who are part of the group that will eventually be glorified and share an eternal future in the presence of the Savior.

The writer next asks these believers to consider or make careful observation of Jesus Christ, the “Apostle and High Priest of our profession.” The Greek for *Apostle* makes reference to an ambassador of the Gospel that has miraculous powers. It goes on to reference one commissioned by Christ; in context here, however, the reference is to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as sent to represent God the Father. That He is our High Priest was established in the previous chapter. “Of our profession” is a reference to the fact that these believers had acknowledged and made public confession of accepting that truth.

**Heb. 3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.**

The writer now goes on to detail what they should “consider” regarding Jesus Christ. In that consideration, he begins a comparison between Jesus and Moses, a prophet held in great esteem by the Jews.

First, He was faithful to the One who appointed Him as was Moses; both were “appointed” by God the Father. The reference to being “faithful” is a reference to how both were trustworthy in fulfilling their commission. Their faithfulness

in serving God in obedience was evidenced through serving his “house”; the Greek states, “a family (more or less related).” A verse from Exodus adds insight.

Ex. 40:38 For the cloud of the LORD *was* upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all **the house of Israel**, throughout all their journeys.

Regarding Moses, it was in reference to his leadership of the house of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness in preparation to entering the Promised Land. Regarding Jesus, it was in reference to His ministry and declaration of the gospel to the house of Israel and His willing sacrifice of Himself on the cross to redeem mankind in preparation for establishing His kingdom (spiritual Israel) in fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as His promise to David.

**Heb. 3:3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.**

**Heb. 3:4 For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.**

The writer is saying that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses in the same way that a builder is more deserving of honor than the house he builds. My paraphrase of verse 4—It takes a man to build a house, but it takes God to make a man.

The writer goes on to elaborate in the following verses.

**Heb. 3:5 And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;**

**Heb. 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.**

Moses was a faithful servant of God to the house of Israel. His ministry established a witness that would have application to future revelation. Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, was ministering to the house of His own building, the true Israel as described by Paul in his letters to the Romans and Galatians.

Rom. 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

Rom. 9:6-8 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Gal. 3:7-9 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Gal. 3:29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The writer is clear that "we" are part of that house "if we hold fast" to our profession. I like the comments made by Kenneth Wuest in his Word Studies in Greek regarding this phrase.

"The 'if' in the Greek text is the particle *ean*, introducing a future, unfulfilled, hypothetical condition. The writer is proposing a condition as yet unfulfilled. If these Jews, to whom he is writing, hold fast their confidence and the rejoicing of the professed hope in Messiah firm to the end of their lives, that fact shows that they belong to the house of God, in other words, are saved. If they do not do so, but instead, renounce that profession and return to the abrogated system of Levitical sacrifices, that shows that they never were saved. It is not the *retention* of salvation that is in question here, but the *possession* of salvation."

This statement is supported by the Apostle John in his first epistle.

1John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 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.

The term *antichrist* is simply a reference to one who is an opponent of Christ, which is the position of every unbeliever.

Matt. 12:25 & 30 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand....He that is not with me is against me....

**Heb. 3:7 ¶ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Heb. 3:8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:**

**Heb. 3:9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.**

**Heb. 3:10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do *always* err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.**

**Heb. 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)**

"Wherefore" – Since continuance in the faith gives evidence of salvation...

The writer inserts a large parenthetical message at this point.

"as the Holy Ghost saith" - This is another statement of the inspiration of the scripture; men wrote as the Holy Spirit supernaturally gave them the words to write. This is a quote from Psalm 95:7-11. By using this quote the writer is

emphasizing the importance of having a tender heart and of listening with spiritual ears. It's the same word for "if" in verse 7 as used in verse 6. In other words, their ability to understand the message is directly dependent on their not hardening their hearts.

The writer is urging these Jewish Christians not to provoke God in the same way that their ancestors did by showing lack of faith in God to deliver on His promises in spite of the many evidences He had given to His power and authority. When they complained about the manna, God gave them quail. When they sent the spies into Canaan, they feared the giants instead of trusting the God who had taken them through the Red Sea to deliver them from the armies of Pharaoh. When Korah led the rebellion against God's appointment of Moses and Aaron, God had the earth open up and swallow them. They complained of thirst, and He gave them water from a rock. The people had every reason to have faith in God and absolutely no valid reason not to trust Him.

Israel's continual lack of faith in spite of God's continued proof of His desire and ability to provide for them according to His word *grieved* Him. The Greek for this word states, "to be vexed with something irksome." I also thought the Greek for the word *err* was telling, "roam (from safety, truth, or virtue):—go astray...." When we refuse to put our faith in God, we are effectively putting ourselves in danger, falling for deceit and showing fear. Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is full of examples of that very truth.

Their lack of faith made God so angry that all the adults of that generation (excepting Caleb and Joshua) were not permitted to settle down in the Promised Land and experience God's blessing.

**Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.**

Now we continue with the "wherefore" from verse 7—Since continuance in the faith gives evidence of salvation...

Take heed or beware that you don't give evidence in your life of the same lack of faith evidenced by the Israelites who were not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Lack of faith in God gives evidence of "an evil heart of unbelief"; in other words, it gives evidence of a false profession. In context, the writer is saying that you can't embrace the sacrificial system of Judaism and claim faith in the sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus fulfills all that is embodied in the ritual of that system and has made it empty and of no effect. To embrace Judaism is to reject Jesus.

To "depart" indicates a choice made. The warning is against making a choice to reject Jesus as the Messiah and God's gift of salvation that is only found through faith in Him. The wording is clear in its implication of their knowledge of the truth. The choice to depart would be one of willful rejection of that truth.

**Heb. 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

The Greek for *deceitfulness* referenced *delusion*. Webster made a very telling statement about delusion:

“A *delusion* is a false judgment, usually affecting the real concerns of life. Or, in other words, it is an erroneous view of something which exists indeed, but has by no means the qualities or attributes ascribed to it.”

These Jewish believers were in danger of falling for the deceit of those who would have them believe that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ wasn't sufficient, that they needed to continue in obedience to the law and reject the gift of God's salvation through grace. The writer knew that these enemies of God were passionate and persistent in their attempts to deceive this body of believers and exhorts them to encourage one another daily to stay strong in their faith. Isn't it a shame that the enemies of God are often more passionate in promoting their false teaching than the body of Christ is about promoting the truth of God's word.

I couldn't help but be reminded of a couple of the proverbs.

Prov. 27:17 ¶ Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Eccl. 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

As is often the case, good old Webster adds insight in his definition for sharpen: “To render more quick or acute in perception.” In other words, believers are to help each other in perceiving or discerning truth; our faith is strengthened through unity of spirit in choosing to obey God's word.

When one who knows the truth chooses to accept false teaching, he gives evidence of a hard or stubborn heart.

“while it is called To day” – This indicates to me that the writer was making reference to the uncertainty of life and / or was expecting the return of the Lord Jesus and knew that the door of opportunity for choosing Jesus as Savior would close. I found a good quote in JFB's commentary: “To-morrow is Satan's to-day; he cares not what good resolutions you form, if only you fix them for to-morrow.”

**Heb. 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;**

Again the writer makes clear that continuance in the faith gives evidence of true faith. As far as I'm concerned, people can argue the point til their blue in the face, but it doesn't change the facts. One who has truly been saved will not depart from the faith. He may have doubts from time to time as evidenced by John the Baptist, but he has no choice but to hang in there. I couldn't help but think of Peter's response to the Lord after a hard teaching that caused many of His followers to reject Him.

John 6:66-69 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, **Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast**

**the words of eternal life.** And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Again, I think it is important to note that the true believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit for security (cf note at 3:1) and is held tightly in the hand of the Father.

John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and **no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.**

Points to note:

- The sheep know their Shepherd and follow Him. It doesn't say "sometimes follow" or "follow for a little while." Again, it is not saying that one will never sin or stray off from time to time, but that sin will not be a continual choice. His choice is to follow the Shepherd in light of knowledge of His love and provision.
- The sheep have been given **eternal life** and will never perish. This is not a conditional statement; it's a black and white statement of truth.
- They are firmly in the grasp of the hand of both Father and Son; no grasp is stronger.

**Heb. 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.**

**Heb. 3:16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.**

**Heb. 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?**

**Heb. 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?**

**Heb. 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.**

The writer again makes a comparison between choosing to follow God in faith and rejecting Him as Lord by using the example of the Israelites whom God miraculously delivered from Egypt in order to bring them into the Promised Land.

Point is made again that the people of Israel chose not to listen to or heed God's word because of a stubborn heart. The writer is emphatic in stating all those who died during the 40 years in the desert were guilty of provoking Him because of their unbelief and experienced the judgment of not being allowed to enter "His rest." Why was it referenced as "His rest?" Because if they had chosen to follow Him in faith as they possessed the land, they would have been able to *rest*, to settle down and experience His provision and protection.