

3:1 - "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

Christ has been presented as God, mediator, brother, and sympathizer. Based upon this, the exhortation is to fix our mind on Christ or 'lets continue to look at Jesus Christ'. The exhortation is similar to that of Hebrews 2:1, but is not presented as forcefully based upon what had been taught in chapter 2. Even the author's address reminds his readers of the great truths just presented. He calls them holy brothers and partakers in a higher calling.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

I Tim. 1:9-10

Jesus is called the Apostle and High Priest of the faith. Apostle means, one who is sent. An apostle had the power and authority of the one that sent him. An apostle speaks completely on behalf of the one who sent him.

"Then Jesus said unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

John 8:28

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know this commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

John 12:49-50

High Priest is the office of supreme mediator or one who reconciles.
(Heb. 2:17)

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

A old testament parallel to the faithfulness of Christ is the faithfulness of Moses. This parallel is used to aid the readers understanding, while at the same time emphasizing Christ's superiority over the old system. Jesus Christ was faithful to God in his role as Apostle and High Priest.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
John 17:4

Moses was likewise appointed by God to be a mediator between God and his household, Israel.

"And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and I will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 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?" Num. 12:6-8

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

Although Moses is used as a parallel, in reality there can be no comparison between Christ and Moses. Moses was looked upon as the builder of the old system. This system was based on the law which was given to Moses and as we have seen God spoke to Moses directly.

Christ as God is above all things and the builder of all things. Therefore Moses is not the builder but a mere part of what is being constructed by Christ.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."
John 1:3

In the analogy, 'house' represents God's people Israel in the old testament and the church in the new testament.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
I Peter 2:5

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;"

Moses, as a servant in God's house, was faithful in establishing, according to divine instruction, the system which prefigured and represented that which would be fulfilled by Christ at the appointed time. In Exodus 35-40 there are 22 references to the faithfulness of Moses. In Exodus 40 alone, there are eight references to Moses being obedient in everything God commanded of him. In Moses' faithfulness and obedience he is an old testament prototype of Christ.

"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;" Deut. 18:15

"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. Deut. 18:18

The law and the sacrificial system was but a figure representing the promise of what was yet to come. (Heb. 8:5, 9:8-9, 9:24, 10:1) As seen by the scripture references this letter will go into great detail in explaining how the old system pre-figured the new system. Christ himself verified that the work of Moses pointed to him.

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" John 5:46

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."

In contrast to Moses, Christ was faithful as a son, and as a son he rules over his own house. The house which he now rules is the church, the fulfillment of the old system and made up of believers.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2:19-22

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. 3:15

Having shown the faithfulness of both Moses and Jesus in their respective callings, the exhortation to the believer is to be faithful. The believer is to have confidence in the gospel message. Confidence is a result of faith and belief. Confidence produces joy. All of our hopes of happiness rest upon the source of our confidence, which is Jesus Christ. Holding fast or continuing in these things is the mark of a true Christian and of a true fellowship which is indeed a part of the household of Christ.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things

is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" II Peter 1:8-10

"Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" John 8:31

"Holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:" I Tim. 1:19

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." I Tim. 3:9

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Titus 1:9

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." I Thes. 5:21

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." II Tim. 1:13

One of the purposes of this letter was to exhort weak Christians to growth. If they held fast to the gospel message they would be profitable members of the church. If they did not take their salvation to heart, outside influences would wear them down, destroy their fellowship, and render them ineffective as scattered individual Christians.

Most mainline denominations were founded by dynamic Christians. Over time outside ideas and philosophies influenced these groups and scriptural principals were no longer adhered to. They are not a part of God's household except for some disillusioned believers among their ranks, rendered totally ineffective by those around them.

3:7-11 - "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of the temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. S I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)"

The words taken from Psalm 95:7-11 echo the exhortation of verses 2:1, 3:1, and 3:6. The exhortation is to take the communications of God to heart, act upon them, and grow in knowledge and grace.

The generation of Israelites which Moses led out of Egypt provide the perfect negative example. God saved the Israelites from slavery miraculously wiping out Egypt in the process. God was faithful, displaying his presence and power.

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:" Ex. 13:21

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no." Ex. 16:4

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?" Ex. 17:6-7

The Israelites would not believe in the plan God had for them, but were full of doubting. Not submitting to the words of God they came to expect his help and mercy.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me? for all the signs which I have shewed among them?" Num. 14:11

The result was that they eventually experienced the wrath of God, when at the doorstep of the promise land they doubted and rebelled. (Num. 14:22-30)

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

The author now continues with the exhortation to faithfulness begun in verse 6. This exhortation was interrupted with the presenting of the negative example of the nation of Israel under Moses.

The thing which will destroy their confidence and the resulting joy is a heart of unbelief, which was just illustrated in the example of the Israelites. Despite

the great display of his power and presence in saving them from the Egyptians, the Israelites failed to believe God was working in their best interests. They heard the communication of God to them, but hardened their hearts through unbelief.

God was calling these Christians to growth, to a 'promise land' of peace of mind and heart in Jesus Christ. He was calling them from the old system of bondage to a new life of freedom in Jesus Christ.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak in the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things after the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Rom. 8:1-6

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

II Peter 1:4

In neglecting the call of God to break ties with the old system, they had begun to show a heart of unbelief. (Heb 2:3) Instead of growth and going forward, compromise may have begun to set in.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communication hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell with them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

II Cor. 6:14-18

The exhortation is one of self examination. Did they believe if they looked back they were not fit for the kingdom? (Luke 9:22) Did they believe they must forsake all? (Luke 14:26) Did they believe all things work together? (Rom. 8:28) By neglecting God's call they are in danger of rebelling against God's plan for them, as the Israelites did before them.

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

An effective way to guard against a heart of unbelief is to do it collectively as a group. Believers are to have a mutual concern for one another, bear another's burdens, and constantly exhort and encourage one another.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. 6:1-2

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 12:10

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." I Thes. 5:11

Trials can lead to despair which is the seed of unbelief. Unbelief in turn leads to additional sin and sin hardens the heart. Sin is deceptive. Playing on man's desire for immediate remedy in times of trial. It is often the case that a Christian is not even aware that unbelief rules a certain aspect of his life.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." II Cor. 11:3

The Jewish Christians faced many trials in their new faith. Compromise in many instances may have produced a short term result. This sin would eventually harden their hearts to the truth of God and instead of growing they would slip back. (Heb 2:1) The exhortations of the letter were needed to prevent this from happening, but it must be ongoing and the job of every believer.

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

The mark of a true Christian and a true fellowship is endurance and continuance in faithfulness. (Heb. 3:6) Again echoing the thought of Hebrews 2:3, the author tries to impress upon his readers the importance of remaining faithful. There is a cost to unfaithfulness. Sin has consequences in this life as well as the next. The urgency and consistency in the act of exhorting one another conveys this importance of remaining faithful.

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Rev. 2:4-5

The great gift of faith given to the believer by God, which at first allowed him to believe, should be held onto and nurtured. This forms the foundation of the believers confidence upon which it is his responsibility to build.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

II Peter 15-7

These verses are also a call to self examination. If they are truly partakers of Christ, they will heed these warnings. Others may depart. Will those who stay faithful till the end, holding onto and building upon the faith given to them in the beginning, hold a special position in the world to come?

"But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."

Rev. 2:25-28

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

The readers are again reminded of the Israelites. They will not remain faithful if they harden their hearts to the communication of God. Are many Christians today suffering the consequences of hardening their hearts to the voice of God which is his word? Is a spirit of unbelief ruling certain areas of your life? Ask yourselves these questions:

1. Do you believe a meek and quiet spirit or truly loving your wife can save a failing marriage?
2. Do you believe God will save someone through your witness?
3. Do you believe prayer makes a difference?
4. Do you really believe if you seek first the kingdom of God all things will be provided?
5. Do you really believe God will work through the apparent hardness of church discipline?

The proof of belief lies in your actions!

3:16-19 - "For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

The example of the Israelites is again brought up for discussion. The first reference in 3:7-11 dealt with the rebellious generation as a whole. Here the author presents the example and applies it to individuals. God was only grieved with those who sinned and did not believe. Joshua and Caleb are the individual exceptions. Unbelief kept the Israelites from what God had intended to be theirs. The Christians are being warned as individuals not to make the same mistake, but to heed the word of God and enter into the fullness of their salvation. They should take advantage of the grace and help available, thus having peace of mind and heart.

They did not enter into the promise land because of unbelief. This does not mean they all went to hell. Remember Moses did not enter in. This chapter is addressed to Christians and is an exhortation to Christians (3:1).