

God Has Spoken
“Bold Assurance”

Introduction: The chapter before us for consideration today is one of profound truth, rich theology, and issues a very strong and straightforward challenge to the Christ-follower.

Without Contextual Understanding We Miss the Truth

- A wavering church community in Rome considering turning away from Christianity
- A return to Judaism much safer—could avoid potential persecution and live peacefully
- To embrace the Christian faith was going to be costly, possibly painful, and could lose much—even their lives
- Not unlike the position we find ourselves in today—tempted to embrace a compromised, watered-down faith, that allows multiple ways to God/Eternal Life

But, comforted with argument of author (Chapters 1, 2)

1. God has spoken finally and definitively in His Son

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. Hebrews 1:1-2a NKJV

2. The Son is eternally exalted at the Father’s right hand, far superior to angels.

But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:13-14 NKJV

3. God’s judgment was certain for those who disobeyed Law, mediated by angels, how much more His final revelation in His Son?

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord. Hebrews 2:2-3a NKJV

4. God does not leave us defeated to face the challenge of the day—energized and enabled by both the exalted Son and the Humbled Son.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Hebrews 2:14-18 NKJV

Message of Chapter 3

- Called to a BOLD ASSURANCE in pursuing Christ (just the opposite of the weak compromise).
- With Christ helping us we are expected to pursue Him with confidence and great faith.
- Contrast with Israel in the wilderness who failed to enter Canaan because of unbelief—believers could forfeit both the victorious life here and eternal life if they did not pursue Christ with bold assurance.
- Refers back to Numbers 13, 14—12 spies sent into Canaan
- Caleb's report

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." Numbers 13:30 NKJV

- Report of other spies

But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." Numbers 13:31-33 NKJV

- People rebelled

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Numbers 14:1-4 NKJV

— God ready to destroy Israel/Moses intercedes

Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord — 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. Numbers 14:20-23 NKJV

NOTE: Would not ever experience the rest for which they had been redeemed—would die in the wilderness

— Writer of Hebrews is saying—you can't afford to make the same mistake. In this culture
MUST BE A BOLD ASSURANCE—FAITH

Two key texts in Chapter 3 that underscore this truth

But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Hebrews 3:6 NKJV

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Hebrews 3:14 NKJV

V. 6 parrēsia—boldness

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. Acts 28:30-31 NKJV

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 John 2:28 NKJV

V. 14 hypostasis—a standing under, a foundation, the quality of confidence that causes one to endure.

Bold Assurance—Confident in the foundation

NOTE: A 2 Timothy 1:12 kind of faith

For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. 2 Timothy 1:12 NKJV

— This was the call to the wavering Hebrews
— This is the call to the contemporary church—BOLD ASSURANCE

Four sections—four motivations to this bold assurance

I. The Qualified Son (1-6)

A. This section begins with a quick look back at Chapters 2-3:1—Therefore...

1. Because of what was said
2. Which was what?

For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Hebrews 2:16-18 NKJV

1. So Jesus does not give aid to angels
2. But does give aid to humanity
3. He is a FAITHFUL and MERCIFUL High Priest
4. FAITHFUL—because He never failed
5. MERCIFUL—because He experienced trials and temptations as we do.

B. Followed by brief description of our position

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. Hebrews 3:1 NKJV

1. Brethren

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Hebrews 2:11 NKJV

2. Partakers of the Heavenly Calling (will be unpacked later)

- a. Present stage

Seeing then that 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 cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus Hebrews 10:19 NKJV

b. Future stage

For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Hebrews 11:10 NKJV

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. Hebrews 11:16 NKJV

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:22-24 NKJV

C. Focused on the qualifications of the Son (3 descriptions)

Told to Consider: (3:1-6)

1. Apostle of our confession

- a. Apostle is a “sent one”, delegate, messenger (apostolos)
- b. John uses a form of word to describe Jesus

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:17 NKJV

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." John 6:29 NKJV

(Apostello)

- c. Made perfect sense after Chapters 1 and 2
 - Better than prophets
 - Better than the angels
 - Better hope than Moses
 - Best representative for the Father
 - Supreme agent of God’s revelation

Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 1:3 NKJV

- d. It is HE we confess

2. High Priest of our confession

- On behalf of God He comes to humanity as Apostle of our confession
- On behalf of sinful humanity He comes to God as our High Priest offering His blood as sacrifice at New Covenant

This is our BOLD confession

- Jesus is perfect revelation of God
- Jesus is fully adequate High Priest on our behalf

3. Faithful Son over His own house

Who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Hebrews 3:2-6 NKJV

1. We are part of this house—God's people
2. IF we have bold assurance to the end

QUALIFIED Son—Apostle and High Priest of our confession—should motivate us to this bold assurance.

II. The Spirit's Warning

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" Hebrews 3:7-11 NKJV

A. These were the people of God called out of Egypt

NOTE: Promise of a people goes back to Egypt

Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.' Exodus 6:6-8 NKJV

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." Exodus 19:5-6 NKJV

B. Though they were called His people, redeemed for Canaan, they rebelled—lost bold assumption

1. Listened to doubters
2. Heard the negative

C. Did not enter their rest (place of refuge to which they were called)

III. The Believer's Challenge (3:12-15)

Three things apparent

1. Believers have a responsibility

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:12-13 NKJV

- a. Rid yourself of unbelief (be vigilant, don't allow the unbelief of the spies to settle in), instead have bold assurance
- b. Encourage one another (13)—NOTE: Do not be responsible for another's lack of faith as the spies were the people

2. Believers need to know their identity

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Hebrews 3:14 NKJV

- a. Partakers of His inheritance

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:14 NKJV

- b. Have become (at conversion)
- c. Partakers of Heavenly Calling (3:1)
- d. Partakers of the Holy Spirit (6:4)

NOTE: Must continue in, hold fast our bold assurance

3. Believers need to sense the urgency

While it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Hebrews 3:15 NKJV

NOTE: It is dangerous not to deal with disobedience TODAY!

IV. The Tragic Loss (16-19)

NOTE: Three rhetorical questions and a conclusion

A. All who had been saved for Canaan perished because of their disobedience

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Hebrews 3:16 NKJV

B. Every day for 40 years they were reminded of their forfeited blessing

Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? Hebrews 3:17 NKJV

C. An oath made it impossible for God to recant

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:18 NKJV

"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30 The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' 32 Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God, 33 who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day. 34 "And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers. Deuteronomy 1:29-35 NKJV

HOW TRAGIC!

TRUTH: An oath seals their loss. God's oath is also what secures His adequate provision of grace.

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Hebrews 6:13-18 NKJV

"The God who pronounces unremitting judgment on the faithless promises unfailing grace to the faithful."

D. Tragedy Sealed

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

Conclusion: The disobedient wilderness generation lost their entire provision for which they had been delivered from Egypt.

1. It is hard, it is difficult.
2. Faithful Son and High Priest is with us.
3. Don't stop now.
4. Walk in faith—in Bold Assurance!