

Christ Superior Person – Part 2

Hebrews 3:1-4:13

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Every week I want to remind you that the book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted. They were going through a time of difficulty and hardships, and in light of that, very simply, they were growing discouraged and downhearted and wanted to go back to Judaism. They thought there was safety there. They had come to know Christ, and we're going to see tonight that they're clearly called "brethren," but they were wanting to leave Christ and go back to the system of Judaism. That's basically what the book is about, writing to them to tell them not to get discouraged, not to lose heart, not to leave Christ and go back to Judaism. He's setting forth all through the book that Jesus Christ is superior, or uses the word "better" over and over, than the old covenant. It's taking all the things of the old covenant and showing that Christ is superior—why would you go back—and it's interspersed with sections warning about the dangers of not going forward but going backwards.

The first section we want to cover tonight, and by the way the theme that we're going to cover tonight is "Christ Is Better Than Moses And Joshua." We've seen that "Christ Is Better Than The Prophets," and "Christ Is Better Than The Angels," and the Jews looked to prophets and angels who transmitted the law. Now they are going to learn that Jesus is better than Moses (and in the mind of the Jew, no one more important than Moses the lawgiver) and that Jesus is better than Joshua who could not lead them into a true rest that's found in Jesus, who is our Joshua, and that we enter in that rest by faith.

The first point we want to cover in Hebrews 3:1-6, Jesus is better than Moses because He has a greater glory. Look at Hebrews 3. The writer of Hebrews says, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," that word "profession" would be perhaps better translated confession. They both mean the same thing. It's a proclamation of your faith in Jesus Christ. "...Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 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. 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 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; 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."

Go back with me to verse 1. It starts with "Wherefore, holy brethren." The "wherefore" goes all the way back to the beginning of Hebrews 1 and wraps up where we've come. First, "Christ Is Better Than The Prophets," "God...spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," and goes on to affirm the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. Then, "Christ Is Better Than The Angels," which in the mind of the Jew actually brought the law to Moses, that they were the transmitters of the law.

Tonight we see "Christ Is Better Than Moses," that He has more glory than Moses. He's going

to break down his argument here in this text. He starts by saying, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," notice the way he identifies the recipients of this letter, "holy brethren." We spoke Sunday about the holiness of God. In this context it's talking about the fact that we as Christians, brethren, we're of the same family of God, have been set apart unto God.

I talked about Sunday, when I spoke on the holiness of God, that God imputes to us God's righteousness, that we're positionally holy the moment we're saved; and then God imparts to us the Holy Spirit to make us righteous, we're progressionally growing in righteousness; and that one day, thirdly, we will be perfectly righteous, that will be a righteousness we possess when we're in heaven without any sin. There's imputed righteousness, Christ's righteousness given to us, which is holiness; there's practical righteousness; and thirdly, there's the righteousness which is total when we're in heaven with the Lord. We're called, as believers, holy brethren; we're set apart.

Again, the brethren isn't just talking to the guys, it's talking to the family of God. When you become a Christian, we are the brethren, the brothers and sisters in the fellowship with God as our Father. By the way, this is the first of several references later on in the chapter, verse 12, "Take heed, brethren," he's going to again mention the fact that they are believers. They are believers, they have been born again, they're brethren in the family of God, but they're getting discouraged by the persecution and the opposition to their faith in Christ and wanting to go back to Judaism.

The writer continues in verse 1, "...partakers of the heavenly calling," so we're holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. God has called us to holiness; God has called us to heaven. Moses gave them an earthly religion, Jesus Christ brought a heavenly religion. He brought a grace of God which takes us to heaven. That "holy brethren" who are heavenly called, so we can keep our focus on heaven. He wants us to do this one thing, verse 1, "...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." The word "consider" means to put your mind down upon. The word literally means to think down upon. It speaks of a consecration or concentration of the mind, to put your mind on these things. Instead of looking at your suffering or your problems, your trials and difficulties, set your mind and your thoughts upon Jesus Christ. I love that old song, Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace. That's what they needed to do; that's what we need to do when we're discouraged.

There's a great way to apply the book of Hebrews to our own lives. When we get discouraged, when we're being persecuted, when we're going through trials and difficulties and want to give up and go back to the old life (we may not be going back to Judaism, but we want to go back to our old ways) or we just want to be comfortable, we don't want to be persecuted or tested, this book tells us to turn our eyes upon Jesus. This is why Hebrews is so filled of Jesus Christ. It exalts Christ because that's the focus. We want to keep our eyes on Jesus and not go back, not get discouraged, not get disheartened.

He's our Apostle, which is an interesting reference to Jesus in that He represents God the Father to us and that He is sent and commissioned. He's actually referred to as an Apostle here in that He's sent out by the Father and that He is the High Priest, and he'll develop that more when we get to the end of Hebrews 4 and into Hebrews 5-7. The main theme of the book of Hebrews is that He is the Superior Priest over the priesthood of the old covenant, and that we should keep our confession of Him, that which we have proclaimed, that we believe and we've trusted Him, and we're following Him.

It goes on to describe the contrast between Moses and Jesus. He says, "Who was faithful to him that appointed him," that's Jesus Christ was faithful. This is where they are similar, "as also Moses was faithful in all his house." He "...was faithful to him," being God the Father, "that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."

The reference to the "house" in relationship to Moses is a reference to the people of God, the children of Israel. This is where it gets a little hard to kind of figure out what he's talking about. He's using the term here "house" for the household of God's people, the family of God, the people of God, in this case the nation of Israel. Moses was a servant appointed over the people of God, the nation of Israel. Jesus also had a "house," but His house is a reference to the church that was established by Christ Himself on the day of Pentecost that He said He would build. It says, "For this man was counted worthy," referring to Jesus Christ, "of more glory than Moses," he says they were both faithful over their own household of faith, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses," Jesus is counted of more glory than that of Moses, "inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." Jesus was the One who created or built the house, the church, so He has more glory than Moses who was just a servant in the house of the nation of Israel.

Verse 4, "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." Again, he's going to make clear that it's Jesus who built not only the church but all things, which is kind of a backhanded way or inference there that Jesus Christ is God, that God is the source and the Creator of all things.

Verse 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," and here's the contrast, "But Christ as a son," so the contrast here is Moses was a servant in the nation of Israel; Jesus was the Son and Creator of the house, and He has more glory than even Moses. It also makes reference to the fact that the end of verse 5, "...for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after," so Moses actually spoke about the things of Christ that would come when Christ fulfilled them. In the Old Testament when Moses wrote the books of Deuteronomy, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, the Pentateuch, all through that references the coming of Messiah, pointing to Jesus Christ. He faithfully spoke of those things which should come. One of the contrasts between Moses and Jesus is Moses was looking forward, preaching in prophetic voice and giving pictures and types; Jesus is the fulfillment of that which Moses predicted, so the fulfillment is greater than the prediction.

Verse 6, “But Christ as a son over his own house,” the contrast is that Moses was a servant, Jesus is the Son in His own house, “whose house are we,” that is, we believers the church, “if we hold fast the confidence,” or the profession or confession, “and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” In these first six verses it’s just kind of warming up to the subject that Jesus is superior to Moses, the contrast that he develops there in the text.

Beginning in verse 7, and running to Hebrews 4:7, I found that a lot of commentaries disagree as to where the warning sections begin and end, so this is the best that I could come up with, I think it’s accurate, is that the next warning section, which is the second of five, begins in Hebrews 3:7 and runs all the way to Hebrews 4:7. Now, he breaks up his argument with a warning now not to go back and the dangers that are involved. Here’s his conclusion in his warning, verse 7, “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,” notice he’s quoting what the Holy Spirit said, and it’s a reference to Psalm 95. If you get a chance, look up Psalm 95. It’s pretty amazing the quote that comes from Psalm 95, that’s used by the writer of Hebrews at this point where he says, “To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest,)” Here’s the warning again, verse 12, “Take heed, 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 To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

This is a marvelous section. Again, it has such great practical application to us. I want to say something that I hope won’t distract when I go through this section. One of the big struggles that people have with the book of Hebrews is that they interpret the warning sections as a warning that these believers are in danger of losing their salvation. This is one of the reasons why people are so interested in the book of Hebrews because they see these warning sections and assume that the writer is warning them that: If you go back, if you leave Jesus and go back, that you’re going to lose your salvation.

I’m a little bit surprised I’m jumping into this right now because it’s a controversial issue—not to me, but people are real sensitive about it. I’m of the conviction that if you have been born again, that if you have been regenerated, that you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you and that you’ve been sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, that you cannot lose your salvation. You can lose your sanctification, you can lose the joy of the Lord, you can lose your rewards, you can lose fellowship, but you won’t lose sonship. I know that there are good Christians that disagree with me on that subject, but I’m convinced that this is what the Bible teaches. When I come to the book of Hebrews, I take what I read in the book of Hebrews and interpret with all the Pauline epistles and the rest of the Scriptures and conclude that Paul is teaching that once we’re regenerated, we cannot be lost.

As we go through this, I’m just saying this now because I’m going to try to kick it into high gear, the illustration of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt—listen to me very carefully—and

coming to the borders of Kadesh Barnea, which is what we're talking about here, and not going into the Promised Land but wandering in the wilderness for forty years and dying off, is not a picture in typology of Christians losing their salvation. It is a picture of Christians who do not enter into the sanctified life—they lose rewards, they lose blessings, they lose the joy of the Lord, they lose fellowship with the Lord. Canaan's land or the Promised Land is not a picture of heaven, it's a picture of the victorious Christian life. If you think of it as heaven, then the Children of Israel coming out in the Exodus with the Passover, which is the cross in the Old Testament, then that's not their salvation, their salvation was when they would cross the Jordan River, and I don't think that's what the typology or the illustration is to be used for at all.

Go back with me to verse 7. He says, "...as the Holy Ghost saith," just a little footnote, Psalm 95 is part of Scripture and the writer of Hebrews acknowledges that he was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That's a psalm of David, and David was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so here's the Holy Spirit referred to as saying in Psalm 95. It's just a little footnote that I thought I would point out that I think is fascinating. He says, "To day if ye will hear his voice," he's limiting it to a day that if you hear God's voice that you don't harden your hearts and uses the term in verse 8, "...as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." What is he referring to? He's referring to the story that's recorded in Numbers 13, and specifically Numbers 14, called the episode at Kadesh Barnea.

What happened was, when the people of Israel were in bondage to Egypt as slaves, God redeemed them from Egypt by the blood of the lamb. They came out of Egypt. In just a few days they came to the border of the Promised Land and could've went right into the Promised Land that God had given them, but instead they decided, "We're going to send twelve spies in," you know the story, "and we're going to spy it out and see if it's okay for us to go in." Well, God had already promised it to them, God had already given His promises in His Word, God had already told them to go into the Promised Land, but they were fearful, they were lacking faith, so they sent in the spies. I don't really think that it was even God's design, purpose, or plan to send spies in. They should've just gone in, in faith, believing God's promises and God's Word, and they would've enjoyed the blessings of the Promised Land.

You know what happened, the twelve spies went in and came back with a report (making a long story short), and there were ten spies that gave an evil report, the Bible says. They said, "Listen, that land is a land that eats up its inhabitants. There's giants in the land, and we are going to be like grasshoppers in their sight. They could just smash us under their feet, so let's not go in. Let's go back to Egypt." Two of the spies, one Joshua and the other Caleb, said, "No. They're bread for us. We can take the land. God has promised it to us," and they brought back the grapes of Eschol, big large grapes, and said, "These are the grapes in the land. It's a good land. It's flowing with milk and honey. God has promised us the land, He's given us His Word, and we need to believe Him and trust Him. Let's go."

What happened was, the ten spies won the day and their unbelief spread like cancer through the congregation of Israel. They all began to weep and cry. They wouldn't listen to Joshua and Caleb. As a matter of fact, they wanted to stone them, put them to death, and wanted to turn

back and go back to Egypt. This is when God then got angry with them and said, "You're not going to go into the Promised Land. Your whole generation are going to die in the wilderness. It's going to be the largest, longest death march in history. For forty years, you're all going to march in circles in the desert until you're all dead and only Joshua and Caleb are going to get to go into the Promised Land." That's the background of what is going on here when he talks about this situation of "...provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness," he's talking about the episode that happened in Kadesh Barnea, verse 9, "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years." Again, he's still quoting from Psalm 95 and continues to quote, verse 10, "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways." Notice, their hearts were not right and they have not known God's ways.

Verse 11, "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." He now begins this concept of entering into the rest that God has provided, not through Moses or Joshua, but through Jesus our Joshua, and we enter into spiritual rest. I'll break that down for you more in just a moment. The theme of Hebrews is: Let us go on to maturity by faith resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Let's not doubt God, let's not disbelieve God. The first warning was that we drift from the Word; now, the second warning is that we doubt the Word; the third warning is we grow dull to the Word; and finally we become disobedient to the Word of God. It's like backsliding in a sense, but they were actually turning away from Christ back to the things of Judaism, "...in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

Verse 12, "Take heed, brethren," again this is still the warning section, and he's going to talk about Christ taking us into rest, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Here we have believers having an evil heart of unbelief. Can Christians have an evil heart of unbelief? The answer is: yes, yes, yes, yes. You can be saved, you can be born again, you can know the Bible's the Word of God, you can be fellowshiping with the people of God, and then you can drift away from the Scriptures. You can drift away from walking with Christ, and you become dull to the Word and disobedient to the Word. From here, all the way to the end of this exhortation section, down to Hebrews 4:13, he's basically saying, "Don't lose heart, don't lose faith, keep your eyes on Jesus, and especially stay in the Word of God." It's so very important. That's what keeps us from drifting backwards. He says, "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

Let me explain this word "rest." When we get to Hebrews 4, the word "rest" is used in about five different ways. I don't know if I can recall them all, but this is important. First, it's used for the Sabbath day, the seventh day. It's Shabbat, the seventh day rest, when God created the heavens and the earth and then rested. When God rested, He did not rest because He was physically tired. God didn't go, "Whew! Man, that's really a lot of work creating all those creatures. I'm tired. I'm going to take a nap." It was a rest of He was finished with the work of creation. It's also a rest of satisfaction that it was good, that it was very good. The second rest is the rest that the people of Israel would get if they, by faith, would enter into the Promised Land. The third rest is a rest for us as believers—listen carefully—when we're born again and we cease from our labors and trust Christ's finished work on the cross to save us. The fourth

rest is the rest of sanctification when the Spirit of God works in our hearts changing us, making us more like Jesus Christ. The Fifth rest is a rest when we have total salvation, we're in the presence of the Lord, and we find rest from our labors. What a marvelous thought.

Think of, as I often do, the three stages of salvation—past, present, and future—justification, sanctification and glorification or imputation, impartation, and that we are also going to be glorified. Sanctification leads to glorification. That is also described here as the “rest”—the rest of salvation, the rest of living by faith, trusting the Lord, the rest when one day we get to heaven and we cease from our labors. I guess the longer you walk with the Lord, the more weary you get in the world and the more you live for that third stage. Amen? This is why we have the seniors' fellowship so we can all encourage one another, “Soon and very soon we're going to be in heaven, and we will be able to rest from all our labors.” What a glorious truth that will be.

Now, he's going to use this illustration of Israel not entering into the Promised Land by faith in obedience to God in His Word, to what they were in danger of doing by turning away from Christ and going back to Judaism. He says, verse 12, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” Remember verse 1 and verse 12, they are “brethren.” They're believers. This is why I said some conclude that they are going to lose their salvation, but that's not what the book of Hebrews is about.

Verse 13, “But exhort one another,” so don't grow weary, don't have unbelief, don't depart from the living God, “But exhort.” That word “exhort” we get our word paraclete from, the same word that's used for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, “...one another daily,” not just once a week on the Sabbath day or Sunday, but everyday, “while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” There's the drifting away from the Word, now there's the disobedience to the Word, and we get deceived by sin. “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,” that is, our confession of faith, “While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation,” that's Kadesh Barnea.

Verse 16, “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases,” I love that word in the King James, “fell in the wilderness?” this was because of their unbelief. They were doubting God's Word, they were killed in the wilderness, “And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?” They didn't believe God's promises, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” You don't want to stop here, you want to continue into Hebrews 4 because the warning section or exhortation section continues all the way down to verse 13. Then, he transitions from verses 14-16 from Moses to Jesus the great High Priest.

Notice Hebrews 4:1, he continues on the warning section, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Here's the first of this let us fear that we not leave the promise but enter into that rest and not come short of it. Verse 2, “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word

preached did not profit them,” that is, the children of Israel, Kadesh Barnea, “not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place,” it’s a reference to God speaking in Genesis 2:2, “of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.”

Again, he’s come back to Kadesh Barnea, he’s come back to Psalm 95, and he said, “... entered not in because of unbelief,” they didn’t mix the Word with faith. Verse 7, “Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David,” he’s still quoting from Psalm 95, “To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus,” the King James Bible has, but it’s a reference to Joshua. This confuses a lot of people. The word “Jesus” there is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Joshua, so it’s not talking about Jesus, it’s talking about Joshua. “For if,” Joshua, “had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” If they had a true rest in the Promised Land, then there wouldn’t have been the prophecy in Psalm 95, David speaking, about a future rest.

Verse 9, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” This is talking about us, by faith, entering into the Spirit-filled, abundant life, resting by faith in Christ. Verse 10, “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour,” which means to strive diligently or to work hard, “therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Basically, it’s just a continuation of this idea that the children of Israel, because of their unbelief, did not enter into the Promised Land. Don’t have a heart of unbelief, enter into the abundant life of faith and trust and obedience to God. Unbelief is a thief of the worst sort. It will rob you of the blessings that God has for you in your Christian life. You heard me say it before, and I’ll say it again, we’re saved by grace through faith. We are sanctified by grace through faith. We’re not saved by grace through faith and then sanctified by our own strength, our own ability, or our own good works; we’re saved by surrendering to the Holy Spirit, letting Him fill our lives, and then walking in obedience to God’s Word.

If you’re going to grow as a Christian, it’s going to take thinking down upon Christ biblically, it’s going to take surrendering and yielding your life to the Holy Spirit and walking in His power, so it’s going to take some diligence and focus on your part. The danger is that you grow weary or discouraged or you have a heart of unbelief and that you turn away from the Lord and go back from Him rather than going forward, just as these Jews were doing going back to Judaism. Many times we will go back to our old life of the flesh and not really walking in the Spirit-filled life that Christ has for us. This whole passage is using this concept of rest and that they’re entering into that rest.

As I mentioned, there’s the rest of salvation, the rest of sanctification, and then there’s the rest of glorification. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, “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.” That’s coming to Him initially for salvation for our souls and then walking in fellowship with Him by faith, and we enter into a life of abundance or sanctification of living the Christian life by faith in the blessings that He has given to us.

In Ephesians 1, when it talks about God having called us by His grace, he talked about the blessings that are ours in Christ, “...in heavenly places in Christ,” Jesus. All the blessings that are ours as Christians are like the Promised Land, it’s like the land flowing with milk and honey. It has to be entered into by faith. It has to be entered into by obedience to Christ. It has to be entered into by trusting the Lord. Just like they failed—didn’t enter into the Promised Land—we can fail as believers to enter into the abundant Christian life that God has for us as believers. It’s the warning to them and the application of warning to us as well. The way in which that we keep from missing out and not enjoying the blessings that God has for us is the fact that we keep our eyes on Jesus, we don’t look back, we walk by faith, and we devote ourselves to the Word of God.

The third section that we cover tonight, actually I read the text beginning in Hebrews 4:8 and runs down to verse 13. Some have the warning section running all the way to the end of Hebrews 4, but I think that it starts in Hebrews 3:7-4:7. Hebrews 4:8 starts the new section where we see that Jesus is better than Joshua and that He provides the rest that Joshua could not. “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day,” so if Joshua had given them rest, they wouldn’t have spoken of another day. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his,” so we need to diligently strive to enter into rest. It’s interesting that we labor to enter into rest, “...lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

Notice verse 12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” He comes to the end of this section where he says that Jesus is better than Joshua because Jesus gave us a rest that Joshua could not in the old covenant.

One of the ways that we labor to enter into rest, verse 11, is by being grounded and growing in the Scriptures, the Word of God, verses 12-13. This is a famous verse that a lot of people know, memorize, and quote, rightfully so, but it’s taken out of its context. In the context, the way to enter into the abundant life of blessings that is yours in Christ is being properly grounded in and growing by and through the Word of God. You’ve heard me say it a million times: You cannot grow apart from the Bible. You can’t grow apart from the Bible. If you are not feeding on God’s Word—reading it, applying it, learning it, growing in it, putting it into practice—you are not growing as a Christian. If you’re a Christian and say, “Well, I’m a Christian, but I don’t read my Bible;” then you are not going forward, you’re going backwards. You’re not growing as a

Christian.

The only way for you to grow as a Christian is through the Word of God, which is alive, "...and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," and that's why it's in this context. That's why it's in the book of Hebrews, that's why it appears here in Hebrews 4. He says, "For the word of God is quick," which is alive, old English for alive, "and powerful," which means active, "and sharper than any twoedged sword," the word "sword" there is used for a large knife that had sharp sides on each part of the blade. The Word of God is like a sword or a large knife, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul," we get our word psyche from that, "and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It's speaking of the power of God's Word to know your heart, to penetrate your heart, to go deep into your heart.

Have you ever read the Bible and had it just cut to the heart? I certainly have. I heard one Chinese Christian one time say, "Every time I read the Bible, it kicks me." I love that. It convicts me. It exposes my sin and also then enables me to live a life victoriously over sin. The Word of God is alive, "and powerful," because it is God's Word, and it cuts deep into our souls and into our hearts. In Ephesians 6, when talking about the armor of God, Paul said to take "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," so we need to grow by reading the Word, by feeding on the Word, and the power of the Word; so give diligence, verse 11, and do that by being devoted, verse 12, to the powerful, living Word of God which is able to convict you and also strengthen you.

Notice he also says that God's Word, and God's Spirit working through the Word, that "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It never ceases to amaze me sometimes when I'm teaching the Bible or preaching the Word, and the Word is just being read or the Word is being taught, and people come up after church and say, "How did you know?" "How did I know what?" "How did you know what I needed to hear? How did you know what I was going through?" Well, what we do is put little bugging devices on the bulletins, you take them home and they sit on a dresser in the bedroom, and then I listen in on the conversations. The Word of God, it's alive and powerful. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces "even to the dividing asunder of...joints and marrow," basically, it's a descriptive term of God's Word cuts deep; God's Word is alive and powerful. It's through God's Word that we get grounded and growing and we keep strong in the things of God.

I'm just going to read verses 14-16 with a couple quick wrap-up comments. We'll get into this next time we're together. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest," that's going to be the theme in Hebrews 5-7, "that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession," or confession, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We'll go over it more next time we're together, but I want you to note that there are four exhortations in this fourth chapter that started with the phrase, "let us." Notice it in verse 1, the first, "Let us therefore fear," be fearful and sober that you don't go back. Then, notice in verse 11, "Let us labour therefore," so not only have fear, but put effort into it; and then notice verse 14, "...let us hold fast our profession," or confession of faith, and that which you professed or you confess continue on. Fourthly, notice in verse 16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." Let us, let us, let us, let us. J. Vernon McGee actually calls this the "lettuce" of Scripture. He says we have the "meat" of the Word, and we have the "lettuce" of the Word—let us be diligent. Again, this warning section and then the transition to Christ our High Priest is telling us to fear, to labor, to hold fast, and to come to the throne of grace in our time of need—Christ is our great High Priest, He's interceding for us, and in our time of need, we can come to Him for grace in an hour of need.

Basically, what we covered tonight was that Jesus is better than Moses, He has a greater glory, greater honor, He's the Son, not the servant; and that Jesus is better than Joshua, for Joshua could not take them into the Promised Land. He did take them eventually into the Promised Land that was physical, but it's Jesus, our Joshua, who takes us into the land of salvation, the land of blessing, and the land of abundance, one day to very Heaven itself. Until then though we have the Word of God and the Scriptures to rest on, and we have our great High Priest in our time of need, we can come to Him and He intercedes for us. Let's pray.