Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

22 February 2015 Message 3 of 12

NLT 40 Minutes

**Better than Moses**

Title

***Hebrews 3:1–4:13***

**Topic:** Apostasy

**Subject:** Why press on with Christ?

**Complement:** Press on to rule with Christ.

**Purpose:** The listeners will diligently serve Christ so they would not lose their millennial reward to rule with Christ.

**Reading:** Hebrews 3:1–4:13

**Song:** “Still”

# Introduction

### Interest: What do you think will happen to people who believe in Christ but later fall away and don’t return?

Backsliders

### Need: This is certainly a doctrinal issue, but it is not simply a theological question. It relates to *people* we know.

Not a Theory

#### Think of someone you know who, for all you could tell, trusted Christ—yet he or she has no interest in Jesus today.

#### Now think of yourself. Where will you be in your faith in Christ 10 years from now?

Man at Finish line

#### In today’s text, we see the nature of the penalty for a believer who fails to continue to trust Christ.

#### In this sense, we will see the more severe side of God.

OT vs. NT

##### We tend to think of God being mean in the OT and nice in the NT.

##### In reality, God is both gracious and just in both testaments.

• 1 • 2
• 3 • 4

##### We must continue to trust Jesus now—and in the future—despite the alluring of the world.

### Intro to MPI: Why press on with Christ?

Why Press on?

### Background: The readers of today’s text were in a very precarious position, ready to dump their faith.

Bkgrd

#### They were Jewish as seen in the many comparisons to the OT—as well as the title “To the Hebrews.”

Christians

Jewish

#### We also know the readers were Christians. These are clearly believers—why else would he repeatedly call them “brothers and sisters”? These Jews were second-generation (2:1-4) believers (3:1; 4:14b-15a; 10:19, 32; cf. 12:7; 13:1, 20-22) who should have matured beyond their present immature state in Christ (5:11-14).

Satan

#### As Satan fell away, these believers were tempted to do the same.

### Preview: Today we’ll see two reasons the author encourages them (and us) to press on in our trust of Christ.

Book
Chart

Press On!

### Text: We will cover a long section—from Hebrews 3:1—4:13.

(So why press on with Christ? The first reason is that…)

# I. Jesus is greater than any person in history.

MP

[No other person ever to walk this earth is superior to Christ. He’s the best!]

## Jesus is greater than Moses (3:1-6).

Jesus over Moses

[The readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism because Christ is greater than Moses in both his glory and position.]

Moses great

### Now Moses was no small person in the eyes of the readers:

#### He was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter and raised in Egypt’s palace.

Adopted

#### Yet God used Moses to bring Israel out of slavery by the most powerful nation on earth.

Parted Sea

Super-power

#### Moses even parted the Sea!

Law

#### He even received the Law of God, inscribed by God’s own hand!

### Christ’s *glory* supersedes Moses since Jesus is Apostle, High Priest and Creator (3:1-4).

#### Jesus was God’s messenger, sent directly from God while Moses was only human. The word can be rendered “Apostle” here—the only time this word is used of Christ, showing that he has the authority of the one who sent him.

1-2

#### Jesus was High Priest while Moses wasn’t.

#### Jesus built God’s house—which is *everything*—while Moses built the tabernacle that was but a shadow of heaven itself. In other words, Jesus was Creator.

3-4

### Christ’s *position* supersedes Moses because He doesn’t just serve along with those destined to rule, but he reigns supremely as God’s Son (3:5-6).

5-6

#### Hodges writes, “By a natural semantic shift to which the Greek word for **house** naturally lends itself, the writer moved from the thought of the house as the sphere where priestly activities transpired to the thought of the ‘house’ as consisting of the people who engaged in these activities. His readers, he affirmed, comprise **His** (the Son’s) ‘house’ contingent, however, on one important consideration: **if** they **hold on** to their **courage** (parrhsi÷an, used four times in Heb., here and in 4:16; 10:19, 35) and **the hope of which** they **boast**” (Hodges, BKC).

Hodges

#### In other words, this second “house” is the place where we serve Christ if we are faithful in this life—the earth itself that we will rule after Christ’s return!

## Jesus is greater than any person we can ever admire.

Jesus Greater

### You may not be impacted so much to think of Jesus as greater than Moses, so read:

#### Jesus is above Mohammed.

#### Jesus is above Buddha.

#### Jesus is above any head of state.

#### Jesus is above your boss.

Reason 1

### So the first reason to press on is that Jesus is above the person you hold in highest regard—more than anyone in history!

MPI

(Subject: But then, what happens when we *put someone else above* Christ? What happens when we don’t press on with Christ? What happens when we *fall away*? The answer to this is actually the second reason to press on with Christ…)

Reason 2

# II. Turning away from Christ forfeits our future rule.

MP

Crown

10-11

[Christians who abandon Jesus will not reign with him after he returns.]

## The readers were in danger of losing their kingdom rule (3:7–4:13).

[Second Warning: The readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism, as it would forfeit their privilege in the future millennial rule.]

### A Christian rejecting Jesus is disinherited from future rule just as Jewish believers rejecting God under Moses never saw Canaan (3:7-19).

7-9

#### Israel's unbelief in the wilderness kept them from Canaan even as unbelieving Jews did not experience rest in Israel years later (3:7-11; cf. Psalm 95:7-11).

#### The readers of Hebrews needed to encourage each other daily to prevent such a hardening of heart (3:12-15).

17-19

12-14

15-16

#### Israel’s unbelief in God’s promise to enter Canaan shows the readers they could miss Canaan too (3:16-19).

Warning
2:1-4

#### This passage is the second of the 5 warnings in Hebrews—the danger of unbelief for the Christian who stops believing in Christ later in life.

Israel Map

5 Warnings in Hebrews

Result?

#### But what is the result for the believer eventually rejecting Christ?

### Israel’s unbelief should warn these Hebrew Christians against rejecting Christ, as disobedience would forfeit their Canaan rest (4:1-13; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; pp. 266i-k).

#### Faithful believers will enter Canaan rest but some Christians will miss it through unbelief (4:1-3a).

1-2

#### What is the rest that they could miss? At least six unreasonable views exist:

What is the Rest?

##### Present Sabbath Rest & Future Heavenly Rest

• Views
(7 clicks)

##### Present Sunday & Grace Rests & Future Heavenly Rest

##### Present Spiritual Rest

##### Present Spiritual & Future Heavenly Rest

##### Future Heavenly Rest

##### Millennial Rest with Present Day Application

##### Future Millennial Rest

#### Future Millennial Rest has the best support:

Millennial Rest

##### **The context** of the previous chapters talks much of the millennial kingdom.

• Context

###### Believers are designated “companions” (*metochoi me,tocoi*) with Christ in His anointing by God as messianic King (1:9 quoting Ps. 45:6-7).

1:9

###### Christ's victory over His enemies before the Millennium (1:13) is linked with the promise that believers will share in that victory (swthri,a; 1:14).

1:14

1:13

###### The same eschatological salvation is referred to three verses later as God’s “place of rest” (2:3), which Christ will share with man in “the world to come,” or millennium (2:5).

2:5

2:3

###### That Christians are companions with Christ in His future dominion is repeated in chapter 3 (3:1, 14; cf. 6:4; 12:8). However, the saints' promise of reigning with Him is contingent upon their continued faithfulness to their confession (3:6b)

3:6b

3:1

##### **The land promise** is mentioned repeatedly in the passage itself (3:7–4:13).

###### The text quotes Psalm 95 five times (3:7-11, 15; 4:3, 5, 7) to emphasize millennial rest in Canaan. Surely the “rest” of Psalm 95 is not eternal rest in heaven or the spiritual rest of salvation, but the repose Israel sought in having her own land. As Psalm 95 is an enthronement psalm that depicts the time of the Messiah’s rule, it is appropriate that the author use this particular psalm to refer to the millennial rest.

• 2 Land promise

4:3
(cf. Ps. 95)

###### The “rest” in this passage must be something that Joshua could have offered his people had they believed. Certainly he could not have offered them salvation (spiritual peace) or eternal life (heaven). However, what he did offer was access to the land so that wherever the people would tread, that land would be theirs (Josh. 1:3).

Joshua offered rest

###### The millennial view best explains the “work” in 4:10: “for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” Most commentators see the work here as a figurative “abstention from servile work” or sinful deeds at all times. However, ceasing work in a literal sense makes better sense since the text compares man's rest with God's rest from His literal work of creation; certainly God does not rest from sinful deeds.

4:10

##### **Other Scripture** often depicts Israel as literally resting in the millennial age.

• 3 Other Scripture

###### God says of Zion, “This is My resting place forever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:14).

Ps. 132:14

###### As God rests there, so will Israel, for He will give the nation rest from pain and turmoil and harsh service in which it has been enslaved (Isa. 14:3).

Isa. 14:3

###### He also promises, “My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest” (Isa. 32:18; cf. Ezek. 34:15).

Isa. 32:18

###### The kingdom age is spoken of as a time in which God “will rest in His love” (Zeph. 3:17).

Tribal Redistribution

###### Ezekiel 47–48 redistributes Joshua’s land.

###### End time geography even has land for the priests and Levites.

End Time Geography

###### Debate exists on how large that land will be, but we should take this as depicting actual land.

Close up

##### **Extra-biblical references** taught about the Sabbath rest in the kingdom age.

• 4 Extra Biblical

###### The rabbis around the time of Christ were the first teach the millennial Sabbath. Many taught that the “Present Age” would last 6000 years, followed by a Sabbath in the “Age to Come” of a literal 1000 years.

Rabbinic Teaching

###### The earliest Christians followed this common Jewish idea of a literal 1000 years of Sabbath.

Earliest Christian

##### **Hebrews 4:8** refers to the Sabbath rest as a time period: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.” Obviously “day” refers to another time period, not another state of being. This does not definitively argue for the millennial view since the heavenly rest view relates to a future time period; however, it is consistent with the kingdom view and inconsistent with the “present spiritual rest” orientation.

4:8-11

#### Faithful believers will enter Canaan rest but some Christians will miss it through unbelief (4:1-3a).

3-5

1-2

#### Entering Canaan to rule after resting from our labors is the Sabbath-rest that Israel rejected through unbelief (4:3b-11).

8-11

6-7

##### We have already seen Jesus superior to prophets, angels, and Moses.

Superior

##### Now we see that Jesus is superior to Joshua.

Superior to Joshua

##### There still remains a Sabbath-rest for us!

Sabbath

#### Jesus will judge every believer by our obedience to God’s living Word to see if we lose our inheritance reward (4:12-13).

12-13

## Rejecting Jesus disqualifies believers from ruling with him.

Rejecting Disinherits

### Jesus will return to bring in his earthly kingdom (Rev. 19).

#### The length of this kingdom will be 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6).

Rev 19-22

#### Many believers will rule here on earth with him (Rev. 5:10).

Rev. 5:10

#### Only those deemed “partakers” or “partners” will reign with him (3:1, 6, 14).

3:14

### However, apostates will not rule with Christ.

Apostates

#### Despite their initial faith in Christ, they were in danger of abandoning that faith by not continuing to hold Jesus higher than prophets, angels, and Moses.

#### Kevin Swanson has a recent book called *Apostate* (explain slides).

Apostates
(7 slides)

#### Present apostates would include people like Oprah Winfrey and Rob Bell, both of whom abandoned their initial, sincere trust in Christ and now lead many astray.

Oprah & Rob Bell

##### Oprah abandoned here Baptist upbringing.

##### Oprah gave Rob Bell many opportunities on 3 November 2014 to proclaim Christ but he blew every one of them (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4vhjXQwrUc>).

##### Now Rob Bell agrees with Oprah that homosexuals can marry (<http://www.charismanews.com/culture/48338-rob-bell-church-moments-away-from-embracing-gay-marriage>

(Why press on with Christ?)

Subject

# Conclusion

### Press on to rule with Christ (MI).

MI

Superior in Person

Hardened Heart

### The author gives two reasons relating to Christ’s person for us to hang in there spiritually (MPs):

MPI

#### Jesus is greater than any person in history—including Moses (3:1-6).

MPII

#### Turning away from Christ forfeits our future rule (3:7–4:13).

### Is your heart hardening (3:7, 15; 4:7)? Let’s bow for prayer:

#### Are you softer or harder towards Jesus than 5 years ago? Why? Tell him that you want to be softened.

#### What concerns you about the fact that, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable” (4:13)? Confess this to God.

4:13

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### He has already proved Christ as superior to the prophets (1:1-3) and angels (1:4–2:14).

### This also included a warning, though the penalty was not detailed (2:1-4).

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### In today’s text, we see the nature of the penalty for a believer who fails to continue to trust Christ.

### In this sense, we see the more severe side of God.

#### We tend to think of God being mean in the OT and nice in the NT.

#### In reality, God is both gracious and just in both testaments.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The original readers of the letter were clearly Christians.

### However, the allure back to Judaism tempted them to fall away.

# Questions

### Is this passage written to Christians or non-Christians?

#### These are clearly believers—why else would he repeatedly call them “brothers and sisters”? These Jews were second-generation (2:1-4) believers (3:1; 4:14-16; 10:19-22, 32-34; 12:7; 13:1, 20-22) who should have matured beyond their present immature state in Christ (5:11-14).

#### The description in 3:1 could only apply to Christians.

### What is the danger that faced these readers?

#### Despite their initial faith in Christ, they were in danger of abandoning that faith by not continuing to hold Jesus higher than prophets, angels, and Moses.

#### Present apostates would include people like Oprah Winfrey and Rob Bell, both of whom abandoned their initial, sincere trust in Christ and now lead many astray.

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### What is the rest that they could miss? At least seven views exist:

#### Present Sabbath Rest & Future Heavenly Rest

#### Present Sunday & Grace Rests & Future Heavenly Rest

#### Present Spiritual Rest

#### Present Spiritual & Future Heavenly Rest

#### Future Heavenly Rest

#### Millennial Rest with Present Day Application

#### Future Millennial Rest has the best support:

##### **The context** of the previous chapters talks much of the millennial kingdom.

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###### Christ's victory over His enemies before the Millennium (1:13) is linked with the promise that believers will share in that victory (swthri,a; 1:14).

###### The same eschatological salvation (swthri,a) is referred to three verses later (2:3), which Christ will share with man in “the world to come,” or Millennium (2:5).

###### That Christians are companions with Christ in His future dominion is repeated in chapter 3 (3:1, 14; cf. 6:4; 12:8). However, the saints' promise of reigning with Him is contingent upon their continued faithfulness to their confession (3:6b)

##### **The land promise** is mentioned repeatedly in the passage itself (3:7–4:13).

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###### The “rest” in this passage must be something that Joshua could have offered his people had they believed. Certainly he could not have offered them salvation (spiritual peace) or eternal life (heaven). However, what he did offer was access to the land so that wherever the people would tread, that land would be theirs (Josh. 1:3).

###### The millennial view best explains the “work” in 4:10: “for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” Most commentators see the work here as a figurative “abstention from servile work” or sinful deeds at all times. However, ceasing work in a literal sense makes better sense since the text compares man's rest with God's rest from His literal work of creation; certainly God does not rest from sinful deeds.

##### **Other Scripture** often depicts Israel as literally resting in the millennial age.

###### God says of Zion, “This is My resting place forever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:14).

###### As God rests there, so will Israel, for He will give the nation rest from pain and turmoil and harsh service in which it has been enslaved (Isa. 14:3).

###### He also promises, “My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest” (Isa. 32:18; cf. Ezek. 34:15).

###### The kingdom age is spoken of as a time in which God “will rest in His love” (Zeph. 3:17).

##### **Extra-biblical references** taught about the Sabbath rest in the kingdom age.

###### Jews first taught the millennial Sabbath:

When Adam died at age 930, “he lacked 70 years from 1000 years, for 1000 years are like one day in the testimony of heaven” (Jubilees 4.30-31, 2nd cent. BC).

Israel “will dwell in confidence in the land. And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one). And the land will be purified from that time and forever” (Jub. 50.5; cf. suppression of Satan’s power in Revelation 20:4).

In Life of Adam and Eve 51.2 (1st cent. AD), the archangel Michael says to Seth regarding Eve's death, “Man of God, do not prolong mourning your dead more than six days, because the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection, the rest of the coming age.”

In this age Israel will be free from laborious work (2 Enoch 65:9 late 1st cent. AD).

###### Christians followed this common Jewish idea of a literal 1000 years of Sabbath:

The six days of creation each represent one thousand years of history (based upon Psalm 90:4), which are followed by “the Sabbath” millennium that commences “when His Son shall come” (Epistle of Barnabas 15.4-9).

Augustine wrote before he became amillennial, “Therefore, the eighth day signifies the new life at the end of the world; the seventh day, the future rest of the saints on this earth” (Augustine, Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons, 259.2).

“A kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem” (Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, 3.25).

“And 6000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day ‘on which God rested from all His works’” (Hippolytus, Fragments on Daniel, 2.4).

##### **Hebrews 4:8** refers to the Sabbath rest as a time period: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.” Obviously “day” refers to another time period, not another state of being. This does not definitively argue for the millennial view since the heavenly rest view relates to a future time period; however, it is consistent with the kingdom view and inconsistent with the “present spiritual rest” orientation.

##### **An Objection** against the millennial view concerns verse 3a, which seems to warn against missing a *present* rest ("Now we who have believed enter that rest– eivjserco,meqa ga,r eivj @thvn# kata,pausin oiv pisteu,santej)." This immediate aspect is reflected in all of the major English translations (NIV, NASB, NEB, REB, KJV, NKJV, RSV, GNB, NBV, Amplified, Moffatt, Phillips, Williams).

**Response**: However, despite this support, there is reason to question a present nuance here. Because of these factors it is better to advocate a futuristic (proleptic) use of the present here.[[1]](#footnote-1) The use of a futuristic present is supported by these factors:

###### The preceding proves an overwhelming amount of eschatological emphases in the passage, in the Book of Hebrews as a whole, in parallel Scriptures, and in the extra-biblical literature.

###### A futuristic present could demonstrate an even more affirmative tone regarding the assurance of rest. Turner notes that futuristic presents "are confident assertions intended to arrest attention with a vivid and realistic tone or else with imminent fulfillment in mind, and they are mainly restricted to the vernacular."[[2]](#footnote-2)

###### The use of the futuristic present is not only well established,[[3]](#footnote-3) but, interestingly enough, the verb e;rcomai employs the futuristic present perhaps more than any other verb.

The Messiah is called the ov e;rco,menoj, the "Coming One" (Matt. 11:3), which means not one who has already arrived or who is in process of arriving (presently) but one who is expected in the future.

The same nuance is used of Hli,aj e;rcetai, "Elijah is coming" (Matt. 17:11), which is present in form but future in meaning.

The nobleman who distributed ten minas in Luke 19:13 commanded his servants, "Put this money to work . . . until I come (evn w|[ e;rcomai) back," employing a future sense.

Christ referred to His future return with the present form pa,lin e;rcomai, "I come again" (John 14:3), which obviously has the futuristic sense of "I *will* come again."

Paul used the futuristic present die,rcomai, "I go/am going" (1 Cor. 16:5), to designate an upcoming visit.

Even in other languages verbs of going often employ a futuristic present.

### Is the warning against all Christians (4:3)?

#### “For we who have believed enter that rest” (NAU, NIV) implies that **all** believers have *already* entered that rest.

#### “The words oi˚ pisteu/santeß should be rendered “we who believe” rather than we who have believed**.** The writer’s concern was not about their original faith in the past, but their perseverance in it (cf. 3:6, 14)” (Hodges, “Hebrews,” in *BKC*, 788).

#### “The readers need to model their lives after Jesus Christ who ‘was faithful to the One who appointed Him’ (3:2) and must be careful to ‘hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first’ (3:14; cf. 3:6). Only thus would they be able to rest from their works *in the joyful possession of their inheritance in the messianic kingdom*” (Hodges, “Hebrews,” in *BKC*, 789 emphasis his).

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

# *Exegetical Idea*: Since Christ is superior to Moses in His glory and position, as unbelief in Moses’ time forfeited entering the Promised Land, so any readers who return to Judaism will forfeit their inheritance in the messianic kingdom (3:1–4:13).

# *Exegetical Idea*: The result of abandoning Christ by returning to Judaism as if Moses supersedes Jesus is to forfeit one’s inheritance in the future millennial kingdom (3:1–4:13).

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason the readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism as if Moses supersedes Jesus is because it would forfeit their inheritance in the future millennial kingdom (3:1–4:13).

# II. Second Warning: As Israel was not able to enter Canaan rest (the Promised Land) because of unbelief, so Christians must continue in obedience to enter their rest in the same Promised Land in the millennial kingdom (3:7–4:13).

# Possible Illustrations

### If we contrast the Reformed and Arminian positions on apostasy, we will see that both come up short.

### We need a more biblical view that addresses all the NT on the subject, holding both the reality of apostasy, yet the assurance of salvation.

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Better than Moses**

***Hebrews 3:1–4:13***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Prologue

# Of the various interpretations of the "Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9), the millennial kingdom view may have the most to commend it. This view sees the rest as future, which is consistent with verse 11 and accounts for the different (*hapax legomena*) Greek word translated "Sabbath-rest." As a Sabbath-rest in the Old Testament was a literal 24-hour day, so the kingdom rest will be limited in time to 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6). This rest is not yet fully realized also (v. 1). The concept of rest in the kingdom age also accurately parallels the Old Testament reference to an inheritance that the Jews in the wilderness sought to attain (v. 11a) but some missed out due to their disobedience (vv. 6, 11b) stemming from lacking a walk of faith (v. 2). Likewise, only obedient believers will rule in the millennium, but those who simply profess to be believers will not. The Sabbath-rest in the passage is deemed "another day" (v. 8)––a day yet future from Joshua's time that was distinct from the 24-hour Sabbath day of Judaism. Finally, in that the Old Testament rest concerned the possession of an actual land (Canaan), the millennial interpretation likewise speaks of inheriting an actual dominion here on earth. For more details, see the comparison of views on the Sabbath rest on pages 266g-k

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism is because Moses supersedes Jesus and they would not rule in the future millennial kingdom (3:1–4:13).

# I. The reason readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism is because Christ is greater than Moses in both his glory and position (3:1-6).

## Christ’s glory supersedes Moses since Jesus is Apostle, High Priest and Creator (3:1-4).

## Christ’s position supersedes Moses because He doesn’t just serve along with those destined to rule, but he reigns supremely as God’s Son (3:5-6).

# II. Second Warning: The readers should not reject Christ by returning to Judaism because it would forfeit their inheritance in the future millennial kingdom (3:7–4:13).

## A Christian rejecting Jesus is disinherited from future rule just as Jewish believers rejecting God under Moses never saw Canaan (3:7-19).

### Israel's unbelief in the wilderness kept them from Canaan even as unbelieving Jews did not experience rest in Israel years later (3:7-11; cf. Psalm 95:7-11).

### The readers of Hebrews needed to encourage each other daily to prevent such a hardening of heart (3:12-15).

### Israel’s unbelief in God’s promise to enter Canaan shows the readers they could miss Canaan too (3:16-19).

## Israel’s unbelief should warn these Hebrew Christians against rejecting Christ as disobedience would forfeit their Canaan rest (4:1-13; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; pp. 266i-k).

### Faithful believers will enter Canaan rest but some Christians will miss it through unbelief (4:1-3a).

### Entering Canaan to rule after resting from our labors is the Sabbath-rest that Israel rejected through unbelief (4:3b-11).

### Jesus will judge every believer by our obedience to God’s living Word to see if we lose our inheritance reward (4:12-13).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will diligently serve Christ so they would not lose their millennial reward to rule with Christ

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: What do you think will happen to people who believe in Christ but later fall away and don’t return?

### Need: This is certainly a doctrinal issue, but it is not simply a theological question. It relates to *people* we know.

### Intro to MPI: Why press on with Christ?

### Background: The readers of today’s text were in a very precarious position, ready to dump their faith.

### Preview: Today we’ll see two reasons the author encourages them (and us) to press on in our trust of Christ.

### Text: We will cover a long section—from Hebrews 3:1—4:13.

(So why press on with Christ? The first reason is that…)

# I. Jesus is greater than any person in history.

## Jesus is greater than Moses (3:1-6).

### Christ’s *glory* supersedes Moses since Jesus is Apostle, High Priest and Creator (3:1-4).

### Christ’s *position* supersedes Moses because He doesn’t just serve along with those destined to rule, but he reigns supremely as God’s Son (3:5-6).

## Jesus is greater than any person we can ever admire.

### Jesus is above Mohammed.

### Jesus is above Buddha.

### Jesus is above any head of state.

### Jesus is above your boss.

### Jesus is above the person you hold in highest regard.

(Subject: But then, what happens when we *put someone else above* Christ? What happens when we don’t press on with Christ? What happens when we *fall away*? The answer to this is actually the second reason to press on with Christ…)

# II. Turning away from Christ forfeits our future rule.

## The readers were in danger of losing their kingdom rule (3:7–4:13).

### A Christian rejecting Jesus is disinherited from future rule just as Jewish believers rejecting God under Moses never saw Canaan (3:7-19).

#### Israel's unbelief in the wilderness kept them from Canaan even as unbelieving Jews did not experience rest in Israel years later (3:7-11; cf. Psalm 95:7-11).

#### The readers of Hebrews needed to encourage each other daily to prevent such a hardening of heart (3:12-15).

#### Israel’s unbelief in God’s promise to enter Canaan shows the readers they could miss Canaan too (3:16-19).

### Israel’s unbelief should warn these Hebrew Christians against rejecting Christ, as disobedience would forfeit their Canaan rest (4:1-13; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; pp. 266i-k).

#### Faithful believers will enter Canaan rest but some Christians will miss it through unbelief (4:1-3a).

#### Entering Canaan to rule after resting from our labors is the Sabbath-rest that Israel rejected through unbelief (4:3b-11).

#### Jesus will judge every believer by our obedience to God’s living Word to see if we lose our inheritance reward (4:12-13).

## Rejecting Jesus disqualifies believers from ruling with him.

### Jesus will return to bring in his earthly kingdom (Rev. 19).

#### The length of this kingdom will be 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6).

#### Many believers will rule with him (Rev. 5:10).

#### Only those deemed “partakers” or “partners” will reign with him (3:1, 6, 14).

### However, apostates will not rule with Christ.

(Why press on with Christ?)

# Conclusion

### Press on to rule with Christ (MI).

### The author gives two reasons to hang in there spiritually (MPs):

#### Jesus is greater than any person in history—including Moses (3:1-6).

#### Turning away from Christ forfeits our future rule (3:7–4:13).

### Is your heart hardening (3:7, 15; 4:7)? Let’s bow for prayer:

#### Are you softer or harder towards Jesus than 5 years ago? Why? Tell him that you want to be softened.

#### What concerns you about the fact that, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable” (4:13)? Confess this to God.

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

22 February 2015

Message 3 of 12

**Better than Moses**

***Hebrews 3:1–4:13***

# Introduction

### What do you think will happen to people who believe in Christ but later fall away and don’t return?

### \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ press on with Christ?

### The readers of our text were in a very precarious position, ready to dump their faith.

# I. Jesus is greater than any \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in history.

## Jesus is greater than Moses (3:1-6).

### Christ’s *glory* supersedes Moses since Jesus is Apostle, High Priest and Creator (3:1-4).

### Christ’s *position* supersedes Moses because He doesn’t just serve along with those destined to rule, but he reigns supremely as God’s Son (3:5-6).

## Jesus is greater than any person we can ever admire.

# II. Turning away from Christ forfeits our future \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## The readers were in danger of losing their kingdom rule (3:7–4:13).

### A Christian rejecting Jesus is disinherited from future rule just as Jewish believers rejecting God under Moses never saw Canaan (3:7-19).

### Israel’s unbelief should warn these Hebrew Christians against rejecting Christ, as disobedience would forfeit their Canaan rest (4:1-13; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

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### However, apostates will not rule with Christ.

(Why press on with Christ?)

# Conclusion

### Press on to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Christ (MI).

### Is your heart hardening (3:7, 15; 4:7)?

#### Are you softer or harder towards Jesus than 5 years ago? Why? Tell him that you want to be softened.

#### What concerns you about the fact that, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable” (4:13)? Confess this to God.

**Thought Questions**

1. Read Hebrews 3:1–4:13 aloud. What was common to both the readers and Jews in the wilderness that preceded them?

|  |  |
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| **Jews in Wilderness** | **Readers of Hebrews** |
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1. What’s the difference between a “pretender” and an “apostate”?

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Text

1. What one thing can you do now so that you will never abandon Christ?

Text

1. Jean Héring, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 29-30; Lünemann, 481; Oberholtzer, "The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13," 192; Stuart, 323; Toussaint, "The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews," 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, in J. H. Moulton, ed., *A* *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3:63; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 869. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Raphael Kühner, and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*,2:1:137-38, § 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)