

“Jesus is Better than Moses”

Session 3 – Hebrews 3:1-4:13

Bible Study Method:
Character Study (Moses) &
Narrative Review (Numbers 13-14)



Leaders Notes: We will compare Moses with Jesus in this session. Moses was the ultimate 'servant in the house,' but he could never provide the internal transformation that only the 'Son over the house' can. By walking through a narrative review of Numbers 13-14, we want to guide our groups to **Discover** why hearts harden, **Develop** a rhythm of daily encouragement, and **Deploy** a faith that trusts God's character more than the popular opinions or “giants” of the world.

If time gets tight, prioritize Section 2. It provides context for everything that follows.

INTRO – 2min

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this section aloud to them.)

In our passage today, the author of Hebrews shows that Jesus is better than Moses. Moses was the most important figure in Jewish history. He was the lawgiver, the deliverer, and the one who spoke to God face-to-face, but the author wants these weary Christ followers us to see that Jesus is better than Moses.

We are also going to look at a dark moment in Israel's history (Numbers 13-14) to understand why the author is so concerned about our hearts becoming hardened.

SECTION 1 – The Builder and the Servant

Hebrews 3:1-6 - (2 Questions - 15min)

Read It: (Ask someone in your group to read this passage aloud.)

- Hebrews 3:1-6

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this aloud to them.)

Notice verse 1. The author asks us to “fix our thoughts on Jesus.” In the original language, this means to observe carefully or detect. We aren't just glancing at Him. We are studying Him to see why He is better than any other leader, religion, ideology, or "safety net" we might trust. For this session, we will compare him to Moses with a character study. In verses 3:3-6, the author uses the analogy of a house. Moses is a servant in the house, but Jesus is the builder of the house. . . the “Son over the house.” Moses was faithful and God used him, but he doesn't even come close to the Hebrews 1:3 description of Jesus as the “exact representation” of God.

Discuss It: The “Discuss It” sections of this guide should be the main course of your time together. The goal is 100% participation in discussion. We want everyone to feel like they are a part of the group. Most of these sections start with Bible questions and move toward personal application so those who don't know Scripture (or are uncomfortable talking about it) can still participate.

- **In practical ways, how do you see people trusting the "servants" (family members, pastors, small group leaders, mentors, religious routines) more than the "Builder"?**

Examples could include:

- Believing their relationship with God is good because they were raised that way
 - Trusting preaching without pursuing a personal relationship with Jesus
 - Serving others to earn points with God
 - Reading the Bible without connecting with God
- **Verse 6 says we are God's house if we hold courageously to our hope, Jesus. What does Jesus offer that Moses' set of rules (Commandments) cannot?**

Moses provided the Law, which acted as an external "map" for righteousness but lacked the power to change the human heart. Jesus, as the "Builder" and "Son," offers internal transformation. While Moses could point to a standard, Jesus provides the grace to meet it and the Holy Spirit to empower us from within. He offers "rest" based on His completed work rather than a burden based on our constant effort.

SECTION 2 – The Heart in the Wilderness

Hebrews 3:7-19 - (4 Questions - 27min)

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this aloud to them.)

In this next section, the author refers to an Old Testament story that would have been familiar to these formerly Jewish Christ followers. In verses 7-11, he quotes from Psalm 95. However, Psalm 95 refers to Numbers 13-14, where God brought His people to the edge of the Promised Land (Kadesh Barnea). They sent 12 spies in. Ten came back saying, "The giants are too big," while two (Joshua and Caleb) said, "God is bigger." All but Joshua and Caleb, chose fear over God's promise and wanted to go back to Egypt. That night, they raised their voices and wept. They didn't understand how God could miraculously bring them out of Egypt with plagues, part the Red Sea, and give them manna to eat in the desert, but then hinder them with large people in those lands. Even with all the miracles, they still didn't trust God.

Moses pleaded with God for their forgiveness, but let's read God's response to him in Numbers 14:20-30

Read It: (Read both passages aloud. Ask two people to read aloud.)

- Numbers 14:20-30
- Hebrews 3:7-19

Discuss It: (Spend most of your time in discussion.)

- In verse 10, God says the people *"always go astray in their hearts."* In the Numbers story, the people had seen the Red Sea part and manna fall, yet they still didn't trust God. Why is it possible to see God's work and still have a "hard heart?"

The Israelites saw the Red Sea part and ate manna daily, yet they still rebelled. This shows that a hard heart isn't a lack of information or evidence; it's a posture of the will. We can experience God's blessings but still refuse to trust His character when things get difficult or don't go our way.

- Moses begged God to forgive the people's sin and God forgives, but they still aren't allowed to enter the "rest" of the Promised Land. Moses could ask for

forgiveness, but that forgiveness would only last until their next sin. How is Jesus better?

Jesus doesn't beg God to forgive us. As a perfect and Holy sacrifice, He paid the price Himself. He also doesn't stop with forgiveness. Jesus changes hearts and by the Holy Spirit we can "sin no more." Jesus has the ultimate and final say. In Him we are invited into the "rest" of the promised land.

Say It: (Lead your group by reading this aloud to them.)

Verse 3:12-13 says to avoid sin by encouraging one another daily, because sin is sometimes hard to spot on our own. Sin doesn't always look "sinful." It usually presents itself as common sense, protection, or a minor compromise. Like the Israelites, we might justify our unbelief as being practical in the face of "giants". These subtle movements can cause us to drift without realizing it. This is why we need the daily encouragement of others to help us see where we've stopped trusting God's character and promise.

Discuss It: (Spend most of your time in discussion.)

- **How has someone in this group helped you see a "blind spot" in your life recently?**

Spend a little time here. Encourage one another. Lead by example. Practicing this type of encouragement strengthens relationships and gives people courage to be vulnerable. ALSO: This would be a good time to remind your group of the BPF core value: *"Authentic Living Over Maintaining Appearances."*

- **In verses 18-19, the author links unbelief directly to disobedience. In your own experience, do we usually disobey because we don't *know* the rules, or because we don't trust the character of the one who made them?**

Most disobedience is a trust issue, not an information issue. The Israelites knew exactly what God commanded, but they feared the "giants" were bigger than God's promise. We usually disobey when we believe that our way of handling a situation (like returning to Egypt) will be better or safer than following God's lead.

SECTION 3 – The Promise of Rest

Hebrews 4:1-13 (2 Questions - 14min)

Read It: (Ask someone in your group to read this passage aloud.)

- Hebrews 4:1-13

Discuss It: (Spend most of your time in discussion.)

- In Chapter 4, "rest" isn't just a nap or a day off; it's the peace of being fully reconciled to God. What are the "Egypt" (old habits, safety nets, or anxieties) that tempt you to give up on God's rest when things get difficult?

"Egypt" represents the familiar security of our old lives. Even though it was slavery, it felt predictable to the Israelites compared to the unknown of the wilderness. For the recipients of this letter, their "Egypt" was a return to the Jewish practices of their childhood and the people surrounding them. For us, an "Egypt" might be striving for approval to feel valuable, returning to old coping mechanisms during stress, or relying on our bank accounts and reputations as our primary safety nets instead of Christ's presence.

- Verse 4:12 describes the Word of God as a "double-edged sword" that judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. When was the last time a passage of Scripture made you feel "exposed" or "cut" in a way that actually led to healing?

If you lead with appropriate vulnerability, this could be a space that people could see the power of God's Word as it directly influences our lives. The "rest" we've been discussing can be found in His Word as God's Word meets us in our circumstances.

DO IT – 5min

Ask your group members to choose two options to practice this week. Talk about your plan and encourage them to share their goals with one another. Plan to discuss their choices again next week. Create a little accountability within your group.

- **The "Daily" Text:** Identify one person in this circle. Commit to sending them a short text of encouragement a few times (daily?) this week. This is not a "to-do" list, but a reminder of who Jesus is or who He has created them to be.

- **The Heart Check:** Tonight, before you go to sleep, ask the Holy Spirit: "Is there any area of my life where I am choosing popular opinion or fear over Your promise of rest?"
- **"Fixing Your Thoughts" Morning Habit:** Commit to a "Scripture over Screen" rule for the first 5-15 minutes of the day. Before checking email, news, or social media, read Hebrews 3:1-3 aloud. Specifically, focus on the phrase "Fix your thoughts on Jesus."
- **The "Rest Audit" (Striving vs. Trusting)** Identify one area of your life right now where you're striving . . . trying to control an outcome, earn someone's approval, or manage a situation through sheer effort and anxiety. Every time you feel that "striving" sensation this week, stop for 30 seconds, breathe, and pray: "Jesus, You are the builder of this house, not me. I choose to enter Your rest in this moment."
- **Double-Edged Presence:** Set a timer for 5 minutes of silence. Read Hebrews 4:12-13 slowly, then ask: "Lord, is there a thought or attitude of my heart that is currently out of alignment with Your rest?" Sit in silence and wait for a response. Live authentically at the internal level. Treat the Bible not just as a book to be studied, but as a "living and active" presence that has permission to search and heal you.

PRAY IT: 2min

(Pray however your group prefers, but if your group struggles with prayer requests becoming a burden we are offering an alternative each week. Remember: The goal is always **Bible Study, Community, and Care**, so praying for one another is important, but it doesn't have to take place inside your meeting times. As a matter of fact, it's better if it reaches beyond your time constraints. You are the leader and guiding your group to healthy practices is important.)

Prayer: (Lead your group by praying this prayer this aloud with them.)

Jesus, You are the builder of our lives and we are amazed at what You've done. We confess that like the Israelites, we often let the "giants" in our week look bigger than Your promises. Soften our hearts. Give us wisdom and create thoughtful moments to remind us to encourage one another so that none of us drifts away. May we find our true rest in You this week. Amen.

TOTAL TIME: 65min