

Christ is Superior to Moses
Hebrews 3:10-11
Part Three

How did the author of the Book of Hebrews seek to strengthen their faith? He sought to strengthen their faith by focusing on the superiority of Christ. So in what ways did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior?

First of all, the author of the Book of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets in Hebrew 1:1-4.

Secondly, the author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the angels in Hebrews 1:5-2:18.

Thirdly, the author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-4:13). And this is the section that we are now examining. It begins in **Hebrews 3:1** and goes all the way down to **Hebrews 4:13**.

So, what was the author's first point? Christ, as an example of faithfulness, is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:1-6**. So where did this point lead Him?

Christ's superior example of faithfulness led the author to warn his readers against the sin of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). This warning begins in **Hebrews 3:7** and continues all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13** and it has two different parts that will focus on two different things.

So, what did the first part of this warning focus on? The first part of the author's warning against the sin of unbelief focused on Israel's past failure in the wilderness after they exited Egypt (Hebrews 3:7-19). So if this was the author's initial focus in the first part of his warning against the sin of unbelief in **Hebrews 3:7** down through **Hebrews 3:19**, what was the first thing he did as he focused on Israel's past failure?

The first thing that the author did as he focused on Israel's past failure was to quote in Hebrews 3:7-11 an Old Testament passage from **Psalms 95:7-11**, which was an exhortation by King David to the nation of Israel to listen to God and not harden their hearts as Israel had done in the wilderness after they had exited Egypt for the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses.

So now let me read **Hebrews 3:7-11** and see if this is not so and what does it say? **“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says [Now here comes the quotations from Psalm 95:7-11], ‘Today if you hear His voice, (8) Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, (9) where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw my works for forty years. (10) Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, “They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways; (11) as I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.””**” So, what was the first thing that the author did as he introduced Israel’s past failure? The first thing that he did was to quote in **Hebrews 3:7-11** an Old Testament passage written by David in **Psalm 95:7-11**, which was in its very broadest sense an accounting of Israel’s past in the wilderness as they exited Egypt. This is what the author did.

So, last week, as we began to examine David’s account of Israel’s past failure, what did we learn? We learned that David’s account of Israel’s past failure initially focused on the hardening of their hearts after they had exited Egypt (Hebrews 3:7-9 cf. Psalm 95:7-9).

So let us go back to **Hebrews 3:7-9** and see if this is not so. **“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says [Now here comes the first part of David’s account as quoted by the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 3:7-9], ‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, (9) where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years.’”** So did David’s account of Israel’s past failure, as quoted by the author of Hebrews here in **Hebrews 3:7-9**, initially focus on Israel’s hardening after they had exited Egypt? Yes, this is exactly what David’s account of Israel’s past failure did. He focused on Israel’s hardening after they had left Egypt.

Israel under the leadership of Moses had left Egypt with so much hope. They were following Moses the man that God had sent them to deliver them from the Egyptians and he was taking them to the Promised Land. And they were excited about this and they had reasons to be excited. But something happened that kept them from experiencing all that they had hoped for. And what was that? Their hearts had become hardened? Hardened to what? Hardened to the voice of God!

This is why David began **Psalm 95:7** with the EXHORTATION, “**Today, if you hear His voice** [in other words God’s voice], **do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, (9) where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years.**”

God is continuously speaking. And in the time of the Exodus God was continuously speaking to the nation of Israel through His prophet Moses, but the nation of Israel, after they had left Egypt, had stopped listening to Moses and thus had stopped listening to God. And because they had stopped listening to God their hearts became hardened to God, or in other words to God and His word, and because their hearts became hardened to God and His word, God and His word became less and less important to them and others things became more and more important to them.

David did not want the nation of Israel to repeat that past failure in the wilderness. He did not want them to stop listening to God, for he knew that in the day that they stopped listening to God, their hearts would become hardened to God and as soon as that happened David knew, based on the past experience of Israel, that bad things most certainly would begin to happen to them.

This concern then apparently led David to change his focus in Psalm 95 from the hardening of Israel’s hearts while in the wilderness to the bad thing that happened to them because of that hardening.

Or we could say it this way, David’s initial focus on the hardening of Israel’s hearts then led him subsequently to focus on God’s judgment that was brought about because of that hardening (Hebrews 3:10-11, cf. Psalm 95:10-11). And this is where we will be this morning as we continue our examination of what David said, as quoted by the author of Hebrews, in **Hebrews 3:10-11**. So let us begin by looking at the words of David, as they were quoted in **Hebrews 3:10**.

The first word was the word “**therefore**” (DIO), placed just before the words, “**I was angry with that generation.**” So, what was the importance of this placement?

Placing the word **“therefore”** just before the words **“I was angry with that generation”** in **verse 10** ties the angry response of God toward that generation in **Hebrews 3:10-11** to the hardening of that’s generation’s hearts, that had already been detailed for us in **Hebrews 3:7-9**.

And who was that generation? It was that generation of Israelites who had hardened their hearts against God, after they had exited Egypt, in spite of all the miraculous works that God had done on their behalf, over a period of 40 years.

So now let us take a closer look at God’s angry response beginning the word **“angry”** in **verse 10**.

The Greek word, from the LXX, that the author chose to use here in **Hebrews 3:10** translated “angry” (PROSOCHTHIZO) does not capture the depth of the anger that the Hebrew word David used in **Psalms 95:10** captured. In fact, the word that David chose to use to capture the depth of God’s anger, in response to their failure in the wilderness when they hardened their heart, was so strong that the English translation of his words in **Psalms 95:10** was not that He **“was angry with that generation”** but that He **“loathed that generation.”**

And what had generated this very intense angry response, or in other words this loathing against that particular generation? It was because of the hardening of their hearts.

So after David had indicated this strong emotional response by God, brought on by the hardening of their hearts, what did David go on to report that God said in response to that hardening? Let us continue to read.

“Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways.’” This statement is very helpful, for in this statement we will learn a whole lot more about this hardening that produced such an anger in God.

So let us now begin to break down this particular statement by God. He begins by saying, **“they** [referring to that generation who had exited Egypt and who in spite of all God’s miraculous works had hardened their hearts

toward Him] **always go astray.**” Or in other words, not once, not twice, but they **“always”** go astray. It was the consistent pattern of their lives.

So, what were the Children of Israel, after they exited Egypt, consistently straying from? The children of Israel after they exited Egypt, based on **Hebrews 3:10**, were consistently straying from **“My ways,”** or in other words from **“God’s ways.”** So, what exactly does this mean?

God’s “ways” were the paths on which God would have wanted them to walk and which would have been consistent with His character (Psalm 81:13, 147:17).

And they were not walking in His ways were they? And why were they not walking in His ways? They were not walking in His ways because they did not know His ways. Isn’t that what the passage says? **“They did not know My ways.”** So, what does this mean?

The word “know” (GINOSKO) speaks of a knowledge gained by experience. The children of Israel did not know God’s ways because they did not have relationship with God.

Nor did they care to have a personal relationship with God. How do we know that? We know that because the verse tells us that they continuously went astray in their “heart.”

The “heart” to the Hebrews represented the center of man’s being. So if the Israelites of that generation were always going astray in their “heart,” it meant that was what they truly wanted in the core of their being. They did not truly want to follow God’s ways. They wanted to follow their ways.

Therefore they had no particular inclination to come to God, to know God, to have an experiential relationship with God, to know His ways or to walk in His ways. And this is why their hearts were described as hardened to God. So now can we understand why God was so angry with the Israelites of that particular generation?

So, what did God do with all this anger? We don’t have to guess. God, through David, as quoted by the Hebrews in **Hebrews 3:11**, went on to tell

us what He did. So now let us read **verse 11**. “**As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.**”

So, what was this “rest” that God in His wrath swore that these Israelites would not enter? The “rest” that the Israelites of that generation forfeited was the rest of the “Promised Land.”

So when did God swear this? We know exactly when God swore this. Let me give you a quick review.

After the Israelites exited Egypt it took three months to reach Mount Sinai. And they remained there for a full year according to **Numbers 10:11-12**. And then what happened? They proceeded from there to Kadesh-Barnea, from where the spies were sent into Canaan. Ten of the spies said that though the land was wonderful, there was no way that they would be able to take it away from the inhabitants of that land. The remaining two spies disagreed with them. So, what was the result of this? God swore an oath that those of fighting age who had voted with the ten spies would never enter into the Promised Land. We see this in **Numbers 14:32-37**.

May God give us the grace to walk in His ways so that we, in walking in those ways, might be continuously assured that we will one day reach our promised land.