

Christ is Superior to Moses
Hebrews 4:6-11
Part 10

Life is not easy. Stuff keeps happening, and if we focus on the stuff it will wear us down. But we were not saved to live in a state of mental, emotional and spiritual exhaustion. We were saved so that we through faith might enter into a place of rest, where our souls, even in the midst of the stuff, might find refreshment.

What did Jesus say to the Jewish multitudes according to **Matthew 11:28-29**? **“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”**

So were we saved to live in a state of mental, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion? No! We were saved so that we through faith might enter into a place of rest, where our souls, even in the midst of the stuff, might find refreshment.

And hopefully this thought will come alive for us this morning as we return to our study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to a group of Hebrew Christians who were suffering a great persecution and who under that persecution had begun to struggle in their faith.

And some of them had begun to struggle so much in their “faith” that they were even thinking about returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author seek to minister to them in this struggle? He sought to strengthen their faith. And how did he seek to do that? He sought to strengthen their faith by focusing on the superiority of Christ, which has led us to the question that we are now asking. How did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior?

The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the prophets (Hebrews 1:1-4).

The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the angels (Hebrews 1:5-2:18).

And now we are in the process of seeing that the author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-4:13). This section that we are presently examining began in **Hebrews 3:1** and will continue all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13**. So, what have we seen so far within this section?

First of all, we have seen that Christ, as an example of faithfulness, is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:1-6**. And why would the author of Hebrews have considered Christ to be superior to Moses as an example of faithfulness?

It was because the author saw Christ, the Son of the living God, as the faithful builder and overseer of the house of Israel, while he only saw Moses as a faithful representative and servant within that house. This is why the author of Hebrews considered Christ as an example of faithfulness to be superior to Moses and his example of faithfulness.

So after the author of Hebrews had made this point in **Hebrews 3:1-6**, what did this lead the author to do next? Christ's superior example of faithfulness led the author to warn his readers against the sin of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). This is the section we are now examining, and we have divided this section into two parts.

The first part of the author's warning against the sin of unbelief focused on Israel's past failure in the wilderness and subsequent judgment after they left Egypt (Hebrews 3:7-19). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:7-19**. So, what did the second part of this warning section focus on?

The second part of the author's warning against the sin of unbelief focused on the promise of rest "today" (Hebrews 4:1-13). This part started in **Hebrews 4:1** and goes all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13**. And this is the section of Scripture that we are presently examining.

So how did the author begin this particular section of Scripture? The author in Hebrews 4:1-2 provided a transitional statement linking what he had said about Israel's past failure to enter the rest that God had promised them and the ongoing promise of rest today.

And what was the point this author was seeking to make within this transitional statement? He wanted his readers, as well as himself, to fear lest

they like Israel might come short of their promised rest. Not the rest in the Promised Land, but rather the promised rest that this author described as **“His rest”** or in other words **“God’s rest,”** which he implied in **verse 2** could only be accessed by faith in the gospel of Christ. So, what did the author do next?

The author in Hebrews 4:3-5 expanded on the nature of the rest that is available “today” through faith in the gospel of Christ. And what did we discover was the nature of that rest?

God’s rest, which is being offered today through faith in Christ, is a rest that flows from completion, when everything that needs to be done has been done and has been done well, such as the rest that God entered into when He completed the six days of His creative activity in **Genesis 2:2**.

And what was the context that surrounded this particular point concerning the nature of God’s rest in **Hebrews 4:3-5**? The context that surrounded this particular point concerning the nature of God’s rest was one of argumentation in support of the author’s belief that God’s rest was still available “today” through faith in Christ.

This is where we left off. So, what did the author do next?

The author in Hebrews 4:6-11 presented a further argument in support of his belief that God’s rest was still available through faith in Christ.

So now let me read for you **Hebrews 4:6-11** and see if this is not so. **“Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, (7) He again fixes a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ (8) For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. (9) So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. (10) For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. (11) Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.”** So did the author in **Hebrews 4:6-11** present a further argument in support

of his belief that God's rest was still available through faith in Christ? Yes, I believe he did.

So now let us look at these verses more carefully. And we will begin with **verse 6**. Hebrews 4:6 is the author's summation of his earlier argument in Hebrews 4:3-5, that the promise of God's rest is still available. This is the significance of **Hebrews 4:6**. So let us now look at this verse more carefully and see if this is not so.

And we will begin with the very first two words. **"Therefore since."** This phrase points us back to **Hebrews 4:3-5** and to the author's earlier argument, in support of his belief, that God's promise of rest was still available to them in spite of Israel's past failure to enter the Promised Land.

So after the author at the beginning of **verse 6** initially pointed his readers back to his earlier argument, what did he do next? After the author had pointed them back to his earlier argument, he then summarized that argument by highlighting two different facts in the remaining portion of **verse 6**. So, what were those two facts?

The first fact that the author highlighted within his summary was it remains for some to enter it. Or in other words, it remains for some to enter God's rest.

The author in **verse 3-5** had established the fact that God's rest, His rest of completion, had not been disturbed by Israel's past failure. The author now in **verse 6**, in summarizing that fact for his readers, made it clear to them that the implication of that particular fact was because God's rest was not disturbed or in other words brought to an end by Israel's past failure, **"It remains for some to enter it,"** or in other words it remains to enter God's rest through faith.

So, what was the second fact that the author summarized in **verse 6**? The second fact that the author summarized was **"And those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience."**

The author in **verses 3-5** had established the fact that Israel had not entered God's rest, because God in His wrath had sworn that they would not enter His rest. The author made this point in **verse 3** and in **verse 5**. The author

now at the end of **verse 6** summarized that fact, making it clear to his readers that the reason why God had sworn in his wrath that the wilderness generation would not in fact enter His rest was **“because of disobedience.”** And what is the implication of this fact? People do not enter God’s rest not because it is not presently available but rather they, lacking faith, choose in defiance of God not to enter it.

So, what is the significance of **Hebrews 4:6**? **Hebrews 4:6** is the author’s summation of his earlier argument in **Hebrews 4:3-5** that supplied to his readers support for his belief that the promise of God’s rest is still available. This is the significance of **Hebrews 4:6**. So, what did the author do next?

The author in Hebrews 4:7 expanded his earlier argument by introducing Psalm 95:7-8. “He again fixes a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’” So did the author in **Hebrews 4:7** introduce **Psalm 95:7-8** in order to expand on his earlier argument in support of his belief that God’s rest still remains available. Yes, he did!

So now let us look at this verse more closely. And how did the author begin? He began with these words, **“He again fixes a certain day.”** So, what is the author saying? There was a day in Israel’s past when they had the opportunity to respond to the gospel that had been preached to them by God through Moses, the gospel of the Promised Land. But they as an expression of their unbelief rejected that gospel and in doing so disobeyed God.

And what did God do in response to their disobedience? He swore in His wrath that they would not enter the Promised Land or in other words that land that was a picture of His rest. But this failure did not preclude God from continuing to offer His promise of rest. And this is why the author was able to begin **verse 7** with the words, **“He again fixes a certain day.”** Or in other words, there is still an opportunity to enter God’s rest, not in the hereafter but rather in the here and now.

And how did the author support this thought? **“He again fixes a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’”** So how did the author support his point that though Israel had failed to enter

God's rest that their failure did not preclude God from continuing to offer His promise of rest to others?

The author supported that thought, in the remaining part of **verse 7**, by quoting from **Psalm 95:7-8** thus reminding his readers that though God had sworn an oath that prevented the wilderness generation from entering the Promised Land, the swearing of that oath did not prevent God **400 years later**, through David in **Psalm 95:7-8**, from warning David's generation not to repeat the same mistake, which would have meant what to this author? It would have meant that God was still speaking and offering the same promise of rest "**today**" not only during David's time and during his generation but by extrapolation to our generation as well.

So after the author made this point by introducing **Psalm 95:7-8**, what did the author of Hebrews do next?

The author in Hebrews 4:8 then addressed a possible objection to his argument. So now let me read for you **Hebrews 4:8** and see if this is not so. And what did the author say? "**For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.**"

So based on this verse, what was the possible objection that the author was seeking to address by what he wrote in this verse? Though the wilderness generation failed to enter the rest that God had promised them, the next generation under the leadership of Joshua did enter that rest, thus bringing the promised rest to its logical conclusion.

But the author of Hebrews argued in **Hebrews 4:8** that such a conclusion would have been impossible in light of the fact that "**If Joshua had given them rest, He** [referring to God] **would not have spoken of another day after that**" as the author in **Hebrews 4:7** had just pointed out to his readers that God had in fact done in **Psalm 95:7-8** through His servant David.

Yes, there was a certain kind of rest that the children of Israel enjoyed after they entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. This is made very clear to us in **Joshua 21:44** but it was a very limited kind of rest, which only served as a picture of the rest that God wanted to provide to His people; or in other words that kind of rest that God Himself enjoys when everything that needs to be done has been done and has been very well such as God

enjoyed when He completed the six days of His creative activity in **Genesis 2:2** and continues to enjoy as the author pointed out earlier in **Hebrews 4:4**.

So after the author's summation of his earlier argument in **Hebrews 4:6**, and after his subsequent expansion of his argument in **Hebrews 4:7**, and then his subsequent response to a possible objection to his argument in **Hebrews 4:8**, what did the author do next in **Hebrews 4:9**? He drew a conclusion.

Let me now read this verse for you and see if this is not so. **“So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.”** So did the author in **Hebrews 4:9** draw a conclusion based on all that preceded this conclusion in **Hebrews 4**? Absolutely!

The author in Hebrews 4:9, based on all that he had said in Hebrews 4:1-8, concluded that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. So now let us look at this verse more carefully.

The word translated “Sabbath rest” (SABBATISMOS) occurs only once in the New Testament and is a different word for “rest” (KATAPPAUSIN) than is used elsewhere in this discussion. So why did the author make this change in the wording?

The change to “Sabbath rest” was doubtless made because the author wanted his readers to think in terms of God's own rest, which he had just explained earlier in Hebrews 4:4 in connection with creation (which flows from knowing that everything that needed to be done had been done and done very well).

And why would the author have wanted his readers to think in terms of God's rest in this particular way? The answer to that question can be found in **Hebrews 4:10**. So now let me read this verse for you. **“For the one who has entered His rest [or in other words God's rest], has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.”** So how does this verse answer the question of why the author wanted his readers to think in terms of God's rest in **Hebrews 4:9**?

He wanted them to think in terms of God's rest because, the author in Hebrews 4:10 was attempting to show his readers that once an individual has entered into God's rest through faith in Christ it would be inconsistent for

them to continue to work in order to secure what they had already secured through faith in Christ, for if they did it would be a sham or in other words it would be no rest at all.

So if we have exercised faith in Christ we have entered God's rest and if we have entered God's rest there is nothing more that we will need to do to secure what we already have for everything that needed to be done to secure our salvation has been done through Christ death, and has been done very well.

But just because there may be nothing more that we need to do to secure what we believe we already have does not mean that we should just sit back and assume that we have it. And this brings us to our next verse.

After the author had shown his readers the inconsistency of working to secure something that had had already been secured, he then warned his readers in Hebrews 4:11.

Let me now read for you **Hebrews 4:11** and see if this is not so. **“Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.”** Yes, if we have entered God's rest it certainly would be inconsistent to work in order to secure what we already have. But we still need to be diligent to enter that rest, not by working for all the work has been done, but rather by what? By believing and exercising faith for it is by faith that we enter God's rest and it is by entering God's rest that we can find rest for our souls.

And how will entering God's rest provide rest for our souls? When we enter God's rest by faith in Christ, we enter God's presence and we will find rest for our souls.

Life is not easy. Stuff keeps happening. And if we focus on the stuff it will wear us down. But we were not saved to live in a state of mental, emotional and spiritual exhaustion. We were saved so that we through faith might enter into a place of rest that Christ made possible through His death on the cross.

May God give us the grace to understand that when we exercise faith in Christ we enter into God's rest, a rest that flows from knowing that everything that needs to be done has been done and done very well.