

Hebrews 3:1-11 – Moses the Servant & Jesus the Son

The focus of chapters 1 & 2 was that Jesus, God's Son, is superior to the angels. Beginning in chapter 3, angels are not mentioned again until chapter 12. I believe that the focus on angels was based on their association with the giving of the law. Chapter 3 starts with a comparison of Jesus and Moses. Moses was strongly associated with the law. The idea that Jesus is worthy of more honor than Moses seems obvious to us. To someone raised as a "disciple of Moses" (John 9:28) it was a point that needed to be made.

Read Hebrews 3:1-6.

In verse 1, the recipients of the letter were told to "consider" Jesus? BDAG says that the meaning of the word in this context is "to think about carefully, envisage, think about, notice". The word is used in a similar way in Hebrews 10:24. How were the recipients described? How was Jesus described? What does "apostle" mean in this context? (3:1)

Verse 2 begins with "who was faithful to him who appointed him"? The "who" and second "him" refer to Jesus. The first "him" refers to God. Most translations have "appointed". The original word is very common and usually means "make" or "do". In this case, the lesser used meaning of "appoint" fits the context. BDAG supports this translation. What position(s) did God appoint Jesus to? Jesus' faithfulness was compared to the faithfulness of Moses. What was said about the faithfulness of Moses? What Old Testament verse was referenced? See Numbers 12:7 which is also quoted in Hebrews 3:5. (3:2)

Verse 3 says that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses. What comparison was used to illustrate the difference between Jesus and Moses? (3:3)

Verse 4 states the seemingly obvious fact that every house is built by someone. We are then told that God is the builder of all things. How does verse 4 relate to the comparison of Jesus and Moses? (3:4)

"Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant" is derived from Numbers 12:7. The emphasis is on Moses' position as a servant. According to verse 5, what was Moses' job? Both Jesus and Moses were faithful, but what was Jesus' position in God's house? What does it mean that "we are his house"? What is required of those who are "God's house"? (3:5-6)

Read Hebrews 3:7-11.

In keeping with the practice of the book of Hebrews, the Old Testament passage quoted in 7-11 was attributed to the Holy Spirit. What passage was quoted in verses 7-11? See Psalm 95:7-11. The quote is almost word for word from the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX). In the Hebrew text of Psalm 95, there is no title. In the Septuagint (LXX), Psalm 95 has a title which can be loosely translated "a song of praise of David". In Hebrews 4:7, David was acknowledged as the writer of Psalm 95. According to Kistemaker, Psalms 95 and 96 were used as an invitation to worship. Do you think the context of Psalm 95 is Exodus 17 or Numbers 13-14? Which best fits Hebrews? (3:7-11)

Psalm 95:7-11 is the main text that will be expounded in the rest of chapter 3 and most of chapter 4. This passage was quoted in the context of the declaration that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses. Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt by the power of God. Moses led the people of Israel to the edge of the Promised Land but not into the Promised Land. That privilege and responsibility was given to Joshua (Jesus). For those who had claimed to be disciples of Moses, what was the message to them? Why didn't Moses enter the Promised Land? See Numbers 20:10-13 and Deuteronomy 32:48-52. Why did God make Israel wander in the wilderness for 40 years? Why was that generation not allowed to enter the Promised Land? See Numbers 13-14 and especially 14:20-23. (3:7-11)

Psalm 95:8 mentions two places. One is Meribah and the other is Massah? What significant events happened at these places? Probably based on the LXX, the writer of Hebrews used the meaning of the Hebrew names. Meribah can mean "quarrel" or "strife" and Massah can mean "testing". (3:8)

What does it mean for someone to "harden their heart"? (3:8)

How do we put God to the test? The people of Israel saw God's plagues on the people of Egypt and they walked through the Red Sea. They saw the Egyptian soldiers drown in the water which they had previously walked through. After all that, they thought God's plan was to deliver them from Egypt and then have them die of thirst in the wilderness or starve to death. Why do people act like this? Think of the Pharisees who saw Jesus perform many miracles and yet still did not believe in him.

Why did God swear that they would not enter his rest? (3:11)