

Hebrews 3:7-12

How we view the Bible will have a significant impact on how we live the Christian life. A high view of the Word of God plays a vital role in a believer remaining faithful to Christ in the midst of suffering and persecution.

This is the case with the believers to whom the author to the Hebrews writes.

The author appeals repeatedly to the OT, expecting his readers to accept the Bible as authoritative and binding and expecting them to endure persecution because of its teaching. The basis for author's high view of Scripture is the Bible's direct claim to divine authorship (**Heb. 1:1; 3:7, 2 Pet 1:21**).

Heb 3:7-8 also shows the abiding relevance and authority of the Scriptures.

Summary

In Hebrews 3:7-12, the author describes events that took place during the Exodus which were applicable to his own time and equally authoritative and relevant to our day because their message is from God who never changes.

1. Wilderness Testing vv. 7-8

The text points us back to a series of historical events; the revolts against Moses during Israel's wandering in the wilderness (**Heb 3:7-8**)

This was a time of testing for the Israelites, which they failed (**Heb 3:8; Exod 17:2-4; Num 14**). God spared the Israelites, at the intercession of Moses, but He also punished them (**Heb 3:11; cf. Ps 95:11**).

The author of Hebrews compares the Exodus to the Christian's present life of faith. Like the Israelites, believers have been delivered by God from the bondage of sin and are headed toward a land of promise, heavenly Canaan.

Just as the Israelites endured a passage of testing in the wilderness, so too this present life is a time of testing for Christians. This is the time in the wilderness, the time of difficulty and often of sorrow and pain. Every Christian is sure to be tested in this life; trials will manifest the reality of our faith, or the lack thereof.

2. Remembered Works vv. 9-12

Like the ancient Israelites, the profession of faith of the believer, will be either proved or disproved by our response to trials.

This is the backdrop to the exhortation: "Do not harden your hearts" (**Heb 3:8**) Make it your goal, Christian, to glorify God through faith before a watching world, even and especially in the context of difficulties and trials.

A complaining spirit is always an indicator of unbelief. If we grumble about God's handling of our affairs, we doubt his wisdom or his goodness, or even his power to lead and protect us; his worthiness to be trusted as our God.

If we grumble and complain, if we rebel and revolt, it indicates a very poor knowledge of God (**3:10**).

How remarkable that these Israelites did not know God after all they had seen and heard and received. They were interested in what God did for them, but not in God himself (**cf. John 17:3**). Ultimately, salvation is a matter of knowing God, understanding his character and his ways, and increasingly trusting him in all things. If you are not growing in your knowledge of God, in your understanding and appreciation of His ways, let this be a warning to you.

Israel complained all through their forty years in the desert, never learning God's ways despite mercy after mercy.

If you resent the challenges God sends, then what was said of those ancient Israelites will be said of you as well (**Heb 3: 9–11**).

Heed the exhortation, therefore, with which our passage concludes (**Heb 3:12**).

3. Jesus in the Wilderness

We are to fix our thoughts on Jesus, our apostle and high priest (**Heb 3:1**).

The Israelites should have fixed their thoughts on the Lord through Moses, who served as their mediator before God.

If the Israelites were condemned for forgetting Moses, how much greater will be the charge against those who forsake Jesus Christ, a far greater mediator and God's own Son (**Heb 2:3**).

When we read of the life of Jesus, we find him, too, sent into the wilderness for a period of trial (**Matt 4:1-2; cf Num. 13:25**). The devil's temptations against Jesus, correspond to the failures of Israel (**Matt 4:4, 4:7, 4:10**).

Jesus has walked ahead of His people to clear the way.

He has blazed the trail of victory through perfect obedience for their salvation.

Though Christians often fail, Christ did not. Through faith in Christ, the failures of believers are hidden in His victory; their faithlessness is garbed in His obedience.

Will you, Christian, make it through this wilderness life, safe across Jordan to the Promised heavenly Land ahead?

You will if you entrust yourself to Jesus, relying on the strength He gives to all His pilgrim people.

He is the shepherd of his flock, and if we follow him, looking to him in faith and relying on his provision, we will find "goodness and mercy . . . all the days of [our lives]," and "shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (**Ps. 23:6**).