

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 3

The apostle having discoursed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Christ's person, and his wondrous grace in the assumption of human nature, and suffering in the room and stead of his people, exhorts the Hebrews in this to a serious consideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and constancy in it; the arguments he uses to engage them to these things are taken from the grace and benefit they themselves were partakers of through him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulness to his Father in the discharge of it, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:1,2) which is illustrated in the case of Moses, who was faithful in the house of God, and whom Christ excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, because he is the builder of the house; and partly, because he is a Son in it, when Moses was only a servant; which house is Christ's own, and consists of true and steadfast believers in him, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:2-6), wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, enforced, and expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:7-11) which are taken out of (~~scrib~~ Psalm 95:7-11) and applied to the present case: hence the apostle cautions against unbelief, as being a great evil in itself, and bad in its consequence, causing persons to depart from the living God, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:12), in order to prevent which he advises to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that so they might not be hardened in sin through the deceitfulness of it, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:13) and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold fast their faith in Christ to the end, since this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:14). And then the exhortation in the above passage of Scripture is recited, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:15) to show, that though not all the persons spoken of, yet some did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 3:16) wherefore, by the example of punishment being inflicted on such, of which instances are given in the forefathers of these people, such as their carcasses falling in the wilderness, and their not entering into the land of Canaan, which they could not, because God swore they should not, being grieved and provoked by them, and because of their unbelief, they are dissuaded from

the same evils, lest they should be punished in like manner, (~~scrib7~~ Hebrews 3:17-19).

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, holy brethren*, etc..] The apostle calls the Hebrews “brethren”, not because they were of the same natural stock and lineage, but because they were in the same spiritual relation; they all had the same Father, belonged to the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were “holy”, not by birth, nor by their external separation from other nations, but through sanctification of the Spirit; and they were so by profession, and in the opinion of the apostle:

partakers of the heavenly calling; by which is meant not any business, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or state; nor a mere external call by the ministry of the word; but an internal special call of grace, to the enjoyment of the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according, to works, but according to the grace of God, and is by powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace: and this is said to be “heavenly”, because the grace by which the saints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Gospel, is from heaven; and this epistle epithet is used to show the excellency of their calling, and to distinguish it from all others: and this the Hebrews are said to be “partakers of”; which shows, that God had not utterly cast off that people, and yet that they were not the only persons that enjoyed the grace of the effectual calling, they were but partners with others; and that the saints are alike sharers in this blessing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to is,

to consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, only “Jesus”; who is called “the apostle”, because he was sent of God to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and salvation for his people, which mission does not suppose any inequality of persons, or change of place, or any compulsion or disrespect to Christ, but love to men; and is to be understood of him as in office as Mediator, and shows his authority, and that he was no impostor. The high priest among the Jews was, on the day of atonement, considered as *יָלַח*, “an apostle”, or “messenger”^{f42}; for so the elders of the sanhedrim address him on that day, saying,

“Lord high priest, we are the messengers of the sanhedrim, and thou art *wyj wl* ☩, “our apostle”, or “messenger”, and the messenger of the sanhedrim.”

And it follows here, and “the high priest of our profession”; which may be understood either objectively, whom they professed, both by words or deeds; for a profession of him should be public, visible, and sincere; or efficiently, he being the author, sum, and substance of the religion, faith, and Gospel which was professed by them: and he is to be “considered” in the greatness and dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in assuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he stands in to them as a Father, husband, brother, friend; and in his several offices, as Mediator, and particularly as sent of God, to be the Saviour of sinners; and as the high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice, and ever lives to make intercession; and all this to encourage the saints to hold fast their profession of him.

Ver. 2. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him*, etc..] Or “made him”; Christ, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the apostle speaking of the divine nature of Christ, but of his offices: wherefore this phrase designs the constitution and settlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as Mediator; the open promise of him in time; his mission, unction, and attestation from God; and his manifestation and declaration as such, at his ascension and session at God's right hand, when he was made Lord and Christ. Now, as Mediator, he had a trust reposed in him; as the persons of all God's elect, and a fulness of all grace for them; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happiness; and also the glory of God in their salvation: which trust he has faithfully discharged as an apostle, and high priest; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his Father's doctrine he brought, and in seeking not his own, but his Father's glory; in redeeming and saving the persons committed to him; in distributing his grace to them; and in bringing them safe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God:

as also Moses was faithful in all his house; the passage referred to is in (^(-OHIZ)Numbers 12:7) and which seems not so much to intend the fidelity of Moses in managing the affairs of God's house, as the largeness of the trust reposed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was invested with, in having the whole house of Israel committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets;

and so the faithfulness of Christ is not so much to be understood of the discharge of his trust, as of the trust itself; and the sense is, that he was trusted much by God the Father, who constituted him Mediator, even as Moses was; and this sense best agrees with (~~388~~ Hebrews 3:5,6). And Deuteronomy Dieu has observed, that the Hebrew word *man*, in Misnic writings^{f43}, signifies, as it does, one that is trusted, or is fit to be trusted, as Christ and Moses were; though the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

Ver. 3. *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses*, etc..] Moses was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people Israel, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he showed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converse he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to pass before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the testimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as Pharaoh and his people, and the Israelites. The Jews give very great commendations of him; they call him a father in the law, a father in wisdom, and a father in prophecy^{f44}; and say, that he is the father, master, head, and prince of all the prophets^{f45}; yea, the great prophet expected in the last days, they say, will be but next to Moses, their master^{f46}: they observe, that there were more miracles wrought by, and for him, than were wrought by, and for all the prophets that have been since the world began^{f47}; so that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and sublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles; but Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal saviour, but he is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation: he is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Gospel, grace, and truth, as Moses never did: he is a greater King than he, being made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than Moses, and had a greater testimony from God than he had, as that he was his beloved Son, and to be heard; he was also raised, from the dead, and is set down at the right hand of God, and is appointed Judge of all; he is ministered to, and worshipped by angels, is believed on by men, who ascribe the whole glory of their salvation to him.

Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; this “house”, or “temple”, as the Arabic version renders it, is the church, of which Christ is the builder; though not to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, who are coefficient builders with him, nor of ministers of the Gospel as instruments, nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another; but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the conversion of souls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his Spirit in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; (see ³⁸⁶²Zechariah 6:12,13) a greater glory than Moses, seeing he was but a part of this house, at most but a pillar in it; but Christ is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone.

Ver. 4. *For every house is built by some man*, etc..] Or by some one; for a house does not build itself: this is true of houses properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general, of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greatest saints, even apostles and prophets, such an one as Moses, are built by and upon Christ; their persons are built on him; they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and their success is owing to him; though they are to be esteemed of in their proper places: the apostle's design is to bring down the high esteem the Jews had of Moses, that they might rightly value Christ.

But he that built all things is God; Christ has built all things, and therefore he is God, and must be infinitely above Moses; for this is not to be understood of God and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Christ, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of that, and all affairs relating to it; such as the constitution of it, settling the worship of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and salvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above Moses.

Ver. 5. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant*, etc..] Moses was not only a servant to the Israelites, but he was also the Lord's servant, a servant of his choosing, sending, and approving; he was a servant in holy things, and served the Lord heartily, sincerely, and ingenuously, with all becoming fear and reverence, respect, and honour, and with all ready and cheerful obedience; the house in which he was a servant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the Son of God, as appears from the following verse; he was not a servant in the world, and

with respect to civil things, and the affairs of Providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things; he did all things exactly according to the pattern showed him in the Mount; and the apostle strongly affirms all this, as well he might, since there was full proof of it, and God himself had bore a testimony to it: and the end of his being a servant here was,

for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; these words may regard his faithful testification of God's will to the people of Israel, after he was fixed as a servant in God's house; or what he said afterwards concerning the Messiah, of whom he spake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable testimony, (^{<BIBL>}Deuteronomy 18:1,5) or they may have respect to the things spoken after Moses's time, by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, which agreed with the testimony of Moses; or to the things afterwards spoken of in this epistle; to which may be added, that Moses in his office was typical of things to be spoken and done by the Messiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; his leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan's land; his giving them the law from Mount Sinai; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the institution of sacrifices and the like.

Ver. 6. *But Christ as a Son over his own house*, etc..] As Moses was not, though the Jews say that he was **tybd hynam**^{f48} and **tybh l [b**^{f49}, “lord and master of the house”; yea, and **tyb `b**, “the Son of the house”^{f50}; but this he was not: Christ is the Son and heir, the Lord and master; he is a Son, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his sonship is the foundation of his office, and he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is said to be “as a Son”, it does not intend mere resemblance; but is expressive of his right to heirship and government, and of the esteem and reverence he had in his house, and of his fidelity as a Son there; and though he was a servant, as man and Mediator, and had a great piece of service to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulness, yet he was also a Son, Lord and heir, as Moses was not; and he is over the house of God, as King, priest, and prophet in it, and as the firstborn, Son and heir, and as the master and governor of it; and which is called his own, because given him by the Father, purchased by himself, and which he has built, and in which he dwells:

whose house are we; believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles; who, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, in whom Christ dwells by faith, and over whom he presides and reigns:

if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. These words are not to be understood as a condition of the former assertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the supposition proves not such an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, shall keep them to the end; and therefore are the house of Christ: besides, the doctrine of apostasy is quite repugnant to the apostle's argument; according to which, Christ might have no house, and can have none till men have persevered: but the apostle's design is to give a word of exhortation to himself and others, to hold fast the confidence; and so the words are rather descriptive of the persons, who are the house of Christ; such who have a good hope, through grace, wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can use freedom of speech and boldness at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of interest in the love of God, and salvation by Christ, and go on in the exercise of these graces to the end of their days.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith,* etc..] In (~~1987~~ Psalm 95:7)

today if you will hear his voice; either the precepts of Christ, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment to Christ as King of saints, and is a testimony of love to him, and is wellpleasing in his sight; and in which the saints find pleasure themselves, and profit also: or the Gospel of Christ, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of liberty, redemption, and salvation by Christ; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and "today" may intend some festival day in David's time, when, and on account of which, this psalm was penned; as the feast of tabernacles, which was a type of Christ tabernacling in human nature; or it may regard the time of man's life, while it is day, or the present instant of life: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation. The psalm from whence these and some following words are taken, belongs to the Messiah; for the person the subject of it, is called the rock of our salvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the ascription of deity, and divine worship; the creation and preservation of the universe; yea, he is represented as a

shepherd, and the saints as his sheep; which plainly points at the office of Christ; and these very words are often made use of by the Jews, and applied to the Messiah, showing that if the Jews would repent but one day, or keep the sabbath but one day, the son of David, the Messiah, would come; since it is said, “today if you will hear his voice”^{f51}; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders *hyrmym*, “his Word”, his essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 8. *Harden not you hearts*, etc.] There is a natural hardness of the heart; the heart of man is like a stone, destitute of spiritual life, motion, and activity; it is senseless, stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, on which no impressions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardness of heart, to which men arrive by various steps; as entertaining pleasing thoughts of sin; an actual commission of it, with frequency, till it becomes customary, and so habitual; an extenuation or justification of it, and so they become hardened against all reproofs and sermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are insensible and past feeling, and openly declare for sin, and glory in it: and there is a hardness which God's people are liable to, and should guard against; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worship, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to lesser sins; for all sin is of an hardening nature:

as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; the Jews provoked God in the wilderness by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by distrusting his power and goodness; hence one of the places in which they murmured against him was called Massah and Meribah, (^[270]Exodus 17:7) and it is an aggravation of their sin, that it was in the wilderness, after they had been just brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had such an instance of the power and goodness of God, in bringing them through the Red sea; and where they could have no human supplies, and therefore should have been entirely dependent on God, and trust in him.

Ver. 9. *When your fathers tempted me*, etc.] This the apostle cites and repeats, to expose the glorying of the Jews in their ancestors; to dissuade them from following their sinful practices; to deter them from the same by observing both their sin and punishment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Gospel of Christ:

proved me; this is either an explication of the former phrase; or it may design the experience this people had of the power and goodness of God, notwithstanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a distrust of them; which is an aggravation of their sin and ingratitude, and shows the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours:

and saw my works forty years; that is, God's works of providence, in furnishing them with the necessaries of life, in guiding, protecting, and supporting them for the space of forty years, in the wilderness; and his miracles, and the punishment of their enemies; yet they saw and perceived not, but all this time sinned against the Lord, (see ^{<620>}Deuteronomy 29:2-8) the space of time, forty years, is in the psalm placed to the beginning of the next verse, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is also by the apostle, in (^{<387>}Hebrews 3:17) but the people's sin, and God's grief at it, being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reason of its being repeated, and so much notice taken of it is, because there was just this number of years from Christ's sufferings, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which the apostle might have in view.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation*, etc..] **rbdmh**

rwd, “the generation of the wilderness”, as the Jews often call them; and which they say was more beloved than any generation ^{f52}; and yet they will not allow them a part in the world to come; (see Gill on “^{<381>}Hebrews 3:11”). When God is said to be grieved with them, it is to be considered as an anthropopathy, as speaking after the manner of men, as in (^{<005>}Genesis 6:5,6). The word signifies, that he was wearied by them, and weary of them; that he loathed them, and was displeased with them; it shows the notice God took of their sin; the heinousness of it, his displicency at it, and determination to punish it: the cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry:

and said, they do alway err in their heart; all sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shows the sottishness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of

integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart sins, as well as others, are taken notice of by God:

and they have not known my ways; they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands.

Ver. 11. *So I swear in my wrath*, etc..] Swearing is ascribed to God, to show the certainty of the thing spoken of; as of mercies, when he swears in love, and by his holiness; so here, of punishment, when he swears in wrath, in indignation, in sore displeasure, and the threatened evil is irrevocable and inevitable:

they shall not enter into my rest; into the land of Canaan, called God's rest, because he promised it, and gave it to the Israelites as their rest; and where he himself had a place of rest; and where he gave the Messiah, the author of peace and rest; and which was a type of heaven, that rest from toil and labour, which remains for the people of God; and into which it is said this generation did not enter; for the Jews say ^{f53},

“the generation of the wilderness have no part in the world to come:”

but this seems too harsh, for doubtless there were many who died in the wilderness, that went safe to heaven, notwithstanding all their sins and provocations.

Ver. 12. *Take heed, brethren*, etc..] This exhortation is grounded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles “brethren”, to show that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love:

lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief; or such an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in

times past: and this sin, when it gets ahead, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfit for duty and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following:

in departing from the living God; that is, from Christ, who is the Son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context; and who is not only the Son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he is life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resented by him.

Ver. 13. *But exhort one another daily*, etc..] In order to prevent unbelief and apostasy. The phrase is sometimes rendered, “comfort one another”, or, “yourselves together”, as in (^{<small>scri>}1 Thessalonians 5:11) which the saints may do, by discoursing together about divine things; by praying together; by instructing one another in the doctrines of the Gospel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promises; and by observing the near approach of everlasting happiness with Christ. And though the business of exhortation greatly belongs to ministers of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes necessary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their conversations;

to a close adherence to their profession; and to a believing view and consideration of Christ, the apostle and high priest of it; and to a due concern for his truth and interest: and this should be done in love, with good and consolatory words, and in things, in which the saints are concerned, and do themselves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulness; and supposes that God's own people may be dull, heavy, and sluggish; and this is to be done “daily”, every day, as often as there is an occasion, and an opportunity for it; and

while it is called today; while the Gospel dispensation continues; or while the time of life lasts. This shows that the phrase “today”, in (~~1987~~ Psalm 95:7) did not respect David's time only. The Syriac version renders it, “until that day which is called today”: until the everlasting day appears, when there will be no need of such exhortations, nor any danger of what follows:

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; actual sin, which is a transgression of the law; every sin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callousness brought upon the heart and conscience; or the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart, which deceives through promises of pleasure, or profit to a man's self, or of secrecy and impunity; it suggests the power a man has to repent at pleasure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

Ver. 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ*, etc..] Being loved by him, given to him, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and so participate of all spiritual blessings in him; for this respects something past, and may be rendered, “we have been made”. The phrase is expressive of union to Christ, which is not by faith on man's part, and by the Spirit on Christ's part, but by his everlasting love, taking his people into an oneness with himself; thereby becoming their head, surety, and representative, which is the ground and foundation of all the blessings of grace being imparted to them: hence arises communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of persons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlasting glory; as it is a federal or representative union, hence a non-imputation of sin, justification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and

the security of it, and of all grace and strength; hence holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance, and everlasting happiness both of soul and body:

if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; by “confidence” is meant faith, which is an hypostasis, or subsistence, which is the word here used; and is so called, because it gives a kind of subsistence, substance, or being, to things it is concerned with, (^{<small>S100</small>}Hebrews 11:1) and because it is a great support to believers, under their various exercises; and is that by which they have an open, spiritual, and comfortable subsistence, and abiding in Christ: the “beginning” of it, which is to be held fast, is either Christ himself, who is the $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$, “the beginning”, the author, and finisher of faith; and so this shows from whom, and in what way, this grace is distributed; and is expressive of communion with Christ, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or else the Gospel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held fast, and never to be departed from: or else the grace of faith itself, which is a grace but begun, not yet finished, but shall continue, and is to be held fast, and constantly exercised; and perseverance in believing on Christ is an evidence of union to him.

Ver. 15. *While it is said today*, etc..] Exhort one another, and hold fast Christ and his Gospel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in (^{<small>S100</small>}Hebrews 3:7,8) in order to make a further improvement of it; which shows, that the words belong to the present times of the Gospel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and that Scripture instructions and exhortations are of perpetual use.

Ver. 16. *For some, when, they had heard*, etc..] The Arabic version adds, “his voice”; the law on Mount Sinai; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole system of laws and ordinances delivered to Moses, and by him to them; and also the Gospel, for that was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, and heard by them; as appears from (^{<small>S100</small>}Hebrews 4:2) and which seems chiefly intended: and yet some of the hearers of it

did provoke; not only Moses, to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but they provoked Jehovah himself, and the angel of his presence, and his Holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief: and the aggravation of their sin is, that they did it when they had heard the Gospel, and while they were hearing it; which shows that the Gospel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careless and indifferent manner; when it

makes no impression, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and Spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Gospel heard, comes to be an aggravation of men's condemnation:

howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses; that is, they did not all provoke, but some did; which is another aggravation of their sin; they were just come out of Egyptian bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outstretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by Moses; by the hand of Moses, as the Syriac version renders it; by his means, by him as an instrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet these were but few; it seems only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand; God will have a few to serve him in the worst of times.

Ver. 17. *But with whom was he grieved forty years?* etc..] As is said in (⁻¹⁹⁵¹⁰Psalm 95:10), (see Gill on "⁻³⁸¹⁰Hebrews 3:10"),

was it not with them that had sinned; not merely by committing personal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing public sins; they sinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commission of sin; every sin is grieving to God, because it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a transgression of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but especially public sins, or the sins of a multitude, and when they are persisted in, which was the case of the Israelites; they sinned against him during the forty years they were in the wilderness; and so long was he grieved with them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "with them that believed not"; which points out the particular sin these men were guilty of, and which was so grieving to God, and suits well with the apostle's design:

whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? and so never entered into the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at least not all of them; their deaths were by way of punishment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the Syriac version renders it, "their bones fell in the wilderness"; they lay scattered and unburied, and exposed to view, as an example of divine vengeance, (see ⁻⁰⁴¹⁴⁹Numbers 14:29).

Ver. 18. *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest,* etc..] As in (^{<4951>}Psalm 95:11 (see Gill on “^{<3881>}Hebrews 3:11”)),

but to them that believed not? the Lord; notwithstanding the signs and wonders he showed among them, they would not be persuaded by Moses and Aaron, by Joshua and Caleb, to be still and quiet, to cease murmuring, and submit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were disobedient, stubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reason God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into the good land. Unbelief is a source of sin, and cause of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

Ver. 19. *So we see that they could not enter in,* etc..] To God's rest, the land of Canaan, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, before they came to it, (^{<4145>}Numbers 14:37,45) and the reason was,

because of unbelief; their distrust of God, his power, and his providence; this instance is produced by the apostle, to show the evil nature of unbelief, and the sad effects of it; to deter persons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which instance he further improves in the following chapter.