

The Book of Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)

Christ's Superiority Over Moses (Part 2)

Hebrews 3:1-6

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; 2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. 3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house — whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

I begin this morning with a bit of a quiz. What do all of the following have in common?

Epaphras (Colossians 1:7); Tychicus (Colossians 4:7); Onesimus (Colossians 4:9); Paul (1 Timothy 1:12); Moses (Numbers 12:7); the slave of Matthew 24:45; the Word of God (Titus 1:9); Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5); and God Himself (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:3, etc.).

What all of these have in common is one word, a word that is used to describe each them. The word is “faithful”. Each of these is referred to in the New Testament as being “faithful” - using the exact same Greek work *pistos* in each case.

Now the word faithful may bring up many connotations in our minds, but there is a singular thought that must be associated with this word and that is the idea of trustworthiness and reliability. To be regarded as “faithful” is to be trustworthy and reliable. This term “faithful” is an absolutely positive word. But, to be sure, and worthy of consideration, there are varying degrees of being “faithful.” For to be sure, as wonderful and faithful as men like Epaphras, Onesimus and even Paul were, how can their being “faithful” compare with the Word of God, Jesus Christ or even God Himself being “faithful”?

In answer to such a question, let us look to our text this morning and I want to first draw your attention back to the only command given in Hebrews 3:1-6 and that is to “consider Jesus” – that is to fully and completely observe the person of Christ. We to desire to examine every possible aspect of Christ. This whole passage then both presents us with the exhortation to so consider Jesus, as well as presenting us two key examples of how a consideration of Jesus will reveal that He is far greater than the greatest figure of all Israel’s history, the man named Moses. As we consider Jesus then in light of the person and prestige of Moses, we will be confronted with this idea of what it means to be “faithful” and how being “faithful” has varying degrees or aspects.

Remember then that we outlined Hebrews 3:1-6 in a three-fold way stating that –

- I. Christ is superior over Moses by Station (3:1)
(Last week) This we have already considered, namely that Jesus holds the superior position or rank of being “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”
- II. Christ is superior over Moses by Stewardship (3:2-4)
- III. Christ is superior over Moses by Sonship (3:5-6)

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II. Christ is superior over Moses by Stewardship (3:2-4)

Let us now take up the matter of the second point, that Christ is superior over Moses by Stewardship as seen in verses 2-4. What we are first confronted with is the similarity between Christ and Moses. Our text is quick to point out that both Christ and Moses are to be regarded as “faithful” or as we have noted, “trustworthy and reliable.” It is important to notice that the author of Hebrews does nothing to denigrate or denounce the honor of Moses. Rather, would you not consider it an honor to have the word “faithful” spoken of in the same sentence containing both the name of Jesus and your own? But remember, the Jewish people by and large would think in reverse terms. While we would certainly consider it an honor to have it said of us, “Both Christ and Ed are faithful” being, I suspect, overwhelmed with such an accolade, the Jews on the other hand would think, “What is this, equating the honor of Moses with the honor of Christ?” Their inclination might have been to say, “I must think about this Jesus more if the author of Hebrews is suggesting that He is as faithful as Moses.”

Further then, notice from verse 2 the similarity in the origin of the calls of both Jesus and Moses. Jesus was “faithful” to Him, that is God the Father, who appointed, or called Jesus to fulfill a divine task, just as Moses was “faithful” to “all His house” – a reference to the people of Israel as the people of God.

But while both of these individuals are regarded as “faithful”, having both received and fulfilled their respective calls of God, the author of Hebrews begins to set Jesus apart for us in verse 3. This would be nothing short of shocking to many of the Jewish readers.

“For He [Jesus] has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.”

Do you see what is happening? In verse 2, Jesus and Moses are presented as similar, as equals of sorts, both being faithful. But now Jesus is regarded to have *“been counted worthy of more glory than Moses...”* Consider Jesus! Why is Jesus worthy of more glory than Moses? To answer that question, we are presented with an axiom commonly held by the ancients - and that axiom was that the architect and builder is greater than that which he builds. While we may agree with this statement in our heads, I do believe it is harder for us to appreciate this thought. We enter some of our great cities today and are surrounded by truly magnificent and incredible buildings of all sorts, shapes and sizes. Yet, relatively few of us know who built such structures. Perhaps some of you may know who built St. Paul’s Cathedral - Sir Christopher Wren, but we are often more impressed with the building itself than with the mind that conceived and achieved such a building. This was not so in the days of the Old and New Testament. Remember that the great temples of the Bible were known by what – who built them. We had Solomon’s Temple and then, after many years of having a less than glorious temple along comes Herod who has the temple rebuilt and refashioned and it became known as “Herod’s Temple.”

So again, we must ask, “Why is Jesus worthy of more glory than Moses?” The answer is that Jesus is the builder of the house, while Moses was simply a steward of the house. In verse 4 we are told that God is the builder of all things, everything that exists is in actuality, built by God Himself. And yet, in verse 3 we are told that Jesus is Himself the builder, worthy of more honor than Moses. Why is this, because if God is the builder of all things and Jesus is the builder of the house, then Jesus must in fact be God, who is then by nature, worthy of more honor than Moses or any other person. You see, since Moses is not the builder of the

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house, he is to be seen in terms of being part of the house that God has built. Moses is a part of the created structure that would not exist apart from the creative effort of God.

Jesus is worthy of more glory, more honor, more renown and recognition than Moses because while Moses was indeed faithful, his faithfulness pales in comparison to the faithfulness of Christ. So, we need to know just how were Moses and Jesus faithful? Consider. First, as noted last week, Moses was called of and sent by God to accomplish the mission of delivering the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt and to impart to the people of Israel God's laws and directives by which they might be holy unto God. Was Moses faithful? Yes, for even the LORD Himself testifies of this in Numbers 12:6-7 where we read:

6 He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household..."

The author of Hebrews takes this statement of the LORD and restates it for us here in Hebrews 3:2. The point is that Moses was and continued to manifest a *passion* and *desire* to accomplish the task the Lord set before him. In Deuteronomy 4:5 Moses states:

See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it.

Moses was faithful to the task given him by God. But as we turn our attention to consider Christ in this matter, what do we find? We also find Christ manifesting a *passion* and *desire* to accomplish the task the Father set before Him, namely to deliver His people from the spiritual bondage of sin and to finally and completely communicate all that people need to know about God and having a right relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. Listen to the testimony of Jesus Himself in this regard and may we take this as our example to follow:

John 4:34

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

John 6:38-40

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

Did Jesus accomplish His task? Consider His further testimony:

John 17:4

I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

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John 19:30

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

You see, the work that Jesus came to do was to save His people from their sins. Everyone deserves to die, but not Jesus. He lived a perfect life before God only to then become the perfect sacrifice, the perfect substitute, and the perfect provision for man’s sin, so that whoever would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved. Whoever will humble himself, to see himself as a sinner, a violator of God’s holiness and would trust in the faithful, trustworthy and reliable word and work of Christ as the only means of being reconciled with God, such a person, knowing the truth of Romans 3:23, *“that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*; who understand the truth of Ezekiel 18:4, *“The soul who sins will die”* and cries out to the Lord for mercy and grace to be manifested in his life will see the Lord change His heart and will see the Lord mold him into a follower of Christ.

You see, while not specifically mentioned in our text, I believe that one of the fundamental truths we can apply from this text is this - Moses was a created steward of God’s house, of the people of Israel. Moses did not find the nation, nor was he her true ruler. Moses was part of the house. Moses was not superhuman, but was flesh and bone, like us. Moses was a sinner in need of God’s grace as much as any one of us. Ultimately we must see that the house, even under the care of Moses, was broken. While Moses was as faithful as any man could be, he was still broken, still beset with sin. Listen to the words of Deuteronomy 32:48-51;

48 The LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, 49 “Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. 50 Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, 51 because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel.

Moses may well have been one of the most faithful of any of fallen men, but he was still fallen. The house was broken. And the last time I checked, a broken house cannot fix itself. No matter how faithful or well built the house may be, there is a limitation on its reliability. How many houses have you seen damaged by the devastation of hurricane Katrina? Numerous, and yet not one of those houses, no matter how faithful they had been, will repair themselves. Rather, the only one who can repair the house is the builder.

As I mention Moses, although he was faithful, he was yet a sinner, and we must come to see that *sin always limits reliability*. Human faithfulness can only be measured in terms of how active sin is in a person. Moses was not sinless. He did fail God on occasion. Moses was used mightily of God and yet he could not be completely relied upon. However, our Lord Jesus Christ is not part of the house. He is the builder. There is no sin in Jesus and therefore there is no limit to His reliability. Is Jesus your builder, the one that you build your life upon, the one whom you trust to enable you to whether the storm; the one you trust to repair you if damaged by the storm? This is the faithfulness of Jesus. He was a faithful steward of the mission God gave Him, even more so than Moses was a faithful steward, for Moses ultimately

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could not save a single person, but Jesus can and does save all who will come to Him by faith, believing He is reliable for salvation and that He is reliable in the words and commands given to us by which we may live for and follow Him.

III. Christ is superior over Moses by Sonship (3:5-6)

The final way in which we are presented in our text to “consider Jesus” is to see not only that was Jesus ultimately more “faithful” in accomplishing the mission given Him by God, but now also that the Son enjoys and functions in a superior relationship with God. Notice the contrast. For in verse 5 we are presented again with the faithfulness of Moses:

Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;

Moses was faithful in all God’s house, but in which way? He was faithful as a “servant.” Now the term “servant” here is a special word in the Greek. The common word for servant or slave in the NT is “*doulos*.” In Romans 1:1, Paul calls himself a “*doulos*” or bond-servant of Christ. But the author of Hebrews uses a word found only here in all the NT. It is the word “*therapon*” in the Greek and speaks of a most honored servant, one who is above the other servants in a house. Now, as honorable as this is, the fact remains that Moses was still a servant. He was one of the most faithful of God’s servants, and his faithfulness was demonstrated in part by being “***a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later.***” You see, Moses spoke of Christ, who was to come. In John 5:45-47, Jesus says,

45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?

Jesus is greater to Moses because in effect, Moses saw the day of Christ and rejoiced in it. All of the Law of Moses pointed to Jesus who would be the Savior and Redeemer. For the testimony of Luke 24:27 is:

Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

The theme of all of Scripture is Jesus Christ. We are to consider Him as we read through every page. We are to see Jesus in the creation accounts. We are to see Jesus in the sacrifices prescribed by the law. We must see Jesus as we read through the Psalms. And we are to find Jesus in the utterances and oracles of the prophets. Moses was simply an honored servant and steward of such blessed things. But look now at verse 6 and consider Jesus, for Jesus is not a servant as Moses was to the house of Israel. Rather our text clearly expresses the idea of contrast, “*but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house...*” What house is being spoken of here? Moses was faithful in all the house of God, that is Israel, but Jesus was faithful “over”, not “in”, His house, that is the Church. We are His house. Our text declares, “*whose house we are...*” Jesus Christ has built this house though His own sacrificial death on behalf of His house. Ultimately then the question is this, “who will you worship?” Will

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...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)

you worship one who is only part of the house, like Moses? There are many dear people whom you love and desire to pattern your life after. And then again there are many dire and spiritually destitute people whom you also love and pattern your life after. All such people are ultimately not faithful in comparison to Jesus. So I ask you to consider Him to pattern your life after Him.

But how can we know if we are rightly considering Him and if we are rightly patterning our lives after His own? Look at the final statement of Hebrews 3:5. Here is the proof and qualifier of our faith, **“if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”**

We must not forget that some of these first readers were considering abandoning the faith rather than considering Jesus. So now they are reminded that if they are part of the house or family Jesus Christ has built, then they will persevere until the end. To abandon or give up on Christ and His people is the surest sign that their faith was spurious, that is false.

Such a word is needed among church-goers today. For among the over 100 million professing believers in the United States, only a fraction of this number are actively involved in a genuine fellowship of believers. Yet all the others continue to glibly claim to be Christians under the guise of “once saved, always saved.” And while the Lord will bring safely home all whom He knows to be His, Hebrews 3:5 eliminates the guise of false assurance. There is no hiding from this truth, that if there is no evidence of a persevering faith then there is no evidence of faith at all.

Am I proposing a works rather than grace oriented salvation? May it never be. According to our text however, holding fast is the evidence that we are part of “His house.” We are to **“hold fast our confidence”** in Christ trusting in His sufficiency as Savior. We are to **“boast of our hope”** in Christ **“firm until the end.”** We must truly be like a compass, whose needle always points north. That compass can be shaken; it can be twisted and it can be jolted so as to momentarily point another direction, but that needle will always find its way back home. A believer may fall into sin and so grieve the Lord. He may bring shame to his life and to his church. But if his faith is sure, if his salvation is from the Lord, then his spiritual needle will point back to his boast and hope, Jesus Christ. And so I ask, are such things true of you?

To consider Jesus as being superior over Moses is a call for each of us to ask ourselves, “Am I really trusting in; do I have that confidence in and do I boast in Christ alone?” Is His superior station, stewardship and sonship that which gives you greatest joy and pleasure? And more importantly, are such truths causing you to persevere in the faith? For if Christ is at work in you, you will hold fast your confidence and Christ will be the boast of your hope firm until the end.

Soli Deo Gloria

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