

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 3)

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.

Let us begin by recounting what we have been learning from the book of Hebrews. To begin with, note back in Hebrews 2:17, Jesus is introduced for the first time to the readers as a merciful and faithful high priest. Then, beginning in Hebrews 3:1-6, the faithfulness of Jesus is actually emphasized. The author wants his readers to realize that compared to any and all else, no one is as faithful – meaning as trustworthy and reliable, as Jesus Christ. In fact, from 3:7 through the rest of chapter, we learn of the danger of unfaithfulness as manifested in His people Israel. Here in our passage, the OT ideas of Messiah as a faithful priest to come and the Son of David as the builder of God's house are combined. They show Christ as a royal priest, a theme that will be built upon later in Hebrews as seen in the life of a king priest named Melchizedek.

To show just how faithful Christ is, our author refers to the greatest figure in Israel's history, the man named Moses. For as we have learned already from Numbers 12:6-8, no other man ever had such accessibility to God. Additionally, we must know that more Scripture was written by Moses than any other man and he is credited then with what is commonly referred to as "the Law of Moses" or "the five Books of Moses" meaning that he edited and wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In Jewish thought then, no other prophet in all of Israel's past was greater than Moses. And yet now, the first Jewish readers have already been challenged in their thinking by the opening verses of Hebrews 1, telling us that in these last days God has spoken in His greatest revelation of all – through His Son, Jesus Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 10:2, Israel was baptized into Moses, meaning that he was their leader. It was Moses who brought the law down from Mount Sinai to the people; and it was Moses who interceded for them when they broke it. And while Aaron was the appointed high priest of Israel, it is said of Moses in Psalm 99:6 that he too is a priest.

So, in review, we learned in Hebrews 1 that Christ the Son is greater than the angels. In Hebrews 2 we learned that Jesus was a man and that being man did not diminish Him as God. And now in Hebrews 3 Jesus is compared with the great and mighty Moses. Remember again the stupendous comment of the LORD God concerning Moses in Numbers 12:7. Here God specifically says of him, "My servant Moses". But what language does God the Father use in reference to Jesus? In Luke 3:22 the Father is recorded of having said of Jesus, "You are My beloved Son". And again, look with me at Luke 9 where we see the presentation of Jesus as greater than Moses and Elijah by both the confession of God the Father as well as by the testimony of Scripture. In Luke 9 we have what is called the "transfiguration" – a moment in

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which Peter, James and John had the awesome privilege of seeing some of the glory of Jesus manifested. Now, in the account, Peter gets awfully excited and wants to honor the three who appeared in glory, that is Elijah, Moses and Jesus. But while he proposed this, verse 35 tells us:

Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!”

Here then is the confession of God the Father again. Jesus is not “My servant” but “My Son.” Right then and there it was to be apparent to these three Jews that their high thoughts of Moses were out of place when it comes to comparing and contemplating the person of Jesus. Oh, beloved that we would well learn this lesson – that we would not look for anything lovely outside of Jesus, for He has all loveliness. Oh that we would rise in our thinking to know that truly we have nothing that compares to the surpassing greatness, the majestic wonder, the deep, deep love of Jesus Christ. I submit to you that in the light of Jesus, upon a proper contemplation of Him, all other persons, great or small, must and will pale in comparison to Jesus. In fact, this was one of the lessons taught to the disciples at the transfiguration. For note what is said in the next verse, Luke 9:36 –

And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

I love that phrase, “Jesus was found alone.” Moses and Elijah had vanished. In the glory of Christ, these men, as great as they were, were nothing compared to Christ. Is this how it is for you? When all of your friends, all of your loved one and all of your goods as seen in comparison to Christ, can it be said by you, “Jesus was found alone”? This is a properly honoring of Christ and a proper perception of Him. But this greatness of Christ was not a sentiment generally shared by the Jews. While many of the readers of Hebrews would have seen Moses as their leader, it failed to dawn on them to consider Jesus of Nazareth as their leader, their priest, as the true son of David, or as the promised prophet greater than Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:17-23). The point is, it would have been very difficult for most of them to imagine Jesus as greater than great Moses. For again, consider the testimony of Scripture they would have contended with. For Deuteronomy 34:10-12 says,

10 Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

So, after Moses there was no prophet like him. These readers, as well as all who would know God, must come to learn that Jesus is the Lord (Romans 10:9), and is in fact the same Lord who spoke face to face with Moses.

And here is an application for us to consider. For the truth is that if anyone does not clearly see Jesus as greater than Moses, or greater than all others, then they cannot truly

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know Him as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (3:1). To see Jesus as less than Moses; to see Jesus as less than anyone or anything else is to understand Him as less than He is. This is nothing short of unbelief and rejection. So then, the author of Hebrews has had as his most pressing concern to show the Person and Work of Christ as clearly superior. What is happening then in Hebrews 3:1-6 is an address to those who have confessed Christ as the Apostle God sent and the High Priest who alone has turned the wrath of God away from His people, making them realize what they are confessing.

This is what we have been studying, the superiority of Christ over Moses. Now we have already considered two of three points, but for clarity let me restate the first two before delving into the third so that we might well understand the progression of argument.

I. Christ is superior over Moses by Station (3:1)

This is that Jesus holds the superior position or rank of being “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.” And not simply “My servant” as was the case with Moses.

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

Here we learned that while both Moses and Christ are regarded as faithful, there was an inherent superiority in the faithfulness of Christ to the mission God called Him to over the call of God on Moses. For while Moses was “faithful” he was not always faithful, for even Moses stumbled before the Lord. Further we noted that Moses, even in his faithfulness, did not ultimately save anyone, for that credit and glory belonged to the Lord alone. However, Jesus was completely faithful to His divine mission, which was to bring all glory to God by actually saving His people from their sin. So then, in this regard, Jesus’ stewardship, the working out of His divine mission, was greater and better than that of Moses.

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

Now then we come to the final point of consideration from our text, namely that Christ is superior over Moses by Sonship in 3:5-6. This then would be the final way in which we are presented in our text to heed the only command in our text, that is to “**consider Jesus**” (3:1). We must see that not only 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

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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 in the house of Israel. Rather verse 6 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 through His own sacrificial death on behalf of His house. Ultimately then the question is this, **“who will you worship?”** Will you worship one who is only part of the house, like Moses? Or will you worship the builder of the house, who is Jesus Christ? 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 and to pattern your life after Him.

The author of Hebrews did something very subtle here in verse 6. Remember that the subject of these verses has been the faithfulness of Christ as the One sent from God as well as the High Priest. But all of a sudden he moves from defining the faithfulness of Christ to now defining the faithfulness of the house that Christ is over. How are Christians defined here? As those who belong to Christ – **“whose house we are”**. What does this mean? Well, believers may be defined in one of two ways. First, they may be defined by their status – for belonging to Christ means to be justified, adopted, and sanctified. But believers may also be defined by their lives. In Hebrews 5:9, believers are those who obey Christ in their lives. In Romans 8:28, believers are those who truly love God. And in Romans 8:9 and 14, believers are defined as those who led by the Holy Spirit. But note this one point well – no one becomes a believer because they obey Christ, love God, or are led by the Spirit. Obedience, love and discipleship by the Spirit is never a condition by which God justifies a sinner, rather such things are always the result. Believers obey Christ because they have been given a heart that desire to obey;

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they love God because God first loved them; and they follow the Spirit because they have been given the inclination or will to do so by God. So then, only those who so hold fast (that is - to retain, not let go) their confession, this confession of Christ as the only Apostle and High Priest are God's house and those who do not never were.

So, 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.

Now 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.”* And what is this confidence and hope? The confidence and hope of the believer is this, that Christ is the One Sent and the Priest who has offered Himself to God as the sacrifice for sin on our behalf. In other words, Jesus is all we need to approach God, because He has already approached God for us. According to God's Word, sin is a barrier that keeps all people from having a right relationship with God. Yet Jesus has once and for all broken down that barrier for those whose lives have so changed by Jesus. Do not think that it is presumptuous or arrogant to have such a confidence, for the confidence is never to be in ourselves, but in what Christ alone has faithfully done for we who are His house. This confidence is a settled conviction that Christ is God's provision for us and since God will not reject our High Priest, He will not reject those for whom the High Priest has mediated, or in our case, sacrificed His very life for. Beloved, please know that this confidence of which I speak is never to be based on how we are doing, or in our faithfulness, for such would be pride, not saving faith. Our hope and confidence is always and only to be based on the One whose life and ministry has pleased God fully so that as Hebrews 5:9 states, Jesus is the “source” or “author” of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.

Such a confidence and hope in Christ is like a compass whose needle always points north. That compass may be shaken at times and it might be twisted or jolted on occasion 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?

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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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