

Jesus Greater than Moses
Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. ³ For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴ (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) ⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

It is important to remind ourselves of who the recipients of this epistle are. There are three groups of people who the author is addressing, true believers who are wrestling with the temptation to return to temple worship and Judaic traditions, people who profess to have believed in the gospel but who are now turning back to Judaism, and some who have not yet made a profession of faith though they have heard the gospel preached. The author addresses each group as a whole and sometimes individually. In today's text the author is addressing the true believers who are struggling through the temptation to return to Judaism. We know they are the true believers because the author addresses them as ***holy brothers and sisters, who share in a heavenly calling***. Contrast that with his address to ***brothers*** only in verse 12 of this same chapter. The context leads us to interpret this use in reference to fellow Jews. As we will see next week 3:7-19 is a call to examine hearts for unbelief, which is only something the author would have directed toward those who needed it.

The author is certainly calling for a heart examination in our text today but it is an examination of heart devotion. Moses held a special place in the hearts and minds of the Jews. In fact, it was the highest place of honor above any other human being that ever lived. In the Jewish mind there was God, the angels, and then Moses, some even placing Moses above the angels. To fully understand the heart of this passage we need to remind ourselves why Moses occupied such a high place in the Jewish heart.

- God had miraculously protected him as a baby
- God performed countless miracles in his life, like the parting of the Red Sea
- He was raised in the house of Pharaoh
- He wrote the Torah
- He received the Law
- He spoke to God face to face
- Etc...

There are many more things we could talk about that would have elevated Moses in the minds of Jews but there are two things in particular that we need to look at. First, Moses was God's chosen messenger and mediator between Himself and the Israelites. He was God's sent one. Second, he stood before God as the primary representative of God's people. This leads us to the first argument that the author of Hebrews makes concerning Jesus being greater than Moses.

1. Jesus is Greater in Office (3:1)

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,

The author tells his fellow brothers and sisters to consider Jesus (*katanoesate*), which means to fix your mind on intently. He tells them to consider Jesus the apostle and High Priest of our faith, or confession. What is his point? He wants them to see Jesus as the primary apostle (*apostoloi*, sent one) and High Priest (mediator between man and God) of our faith. The author uses a very respectful view of Moses to compare to Jesus. He basically says, Moses was _____, and very good at it, but Jesus was an even better _____. In this particular argument he is saying that Moses was a great messenger sent from God to the people and a terrific representative of the people before God, but Jesus is better. How?

- Jesus was literally the one sent from God as he was sent from heaven to be born of a virgin.
- Moses was sent with a message of blessing and cursing that was good, but Jesus was sent with the ultimate message of salvation through his gospel
- Moses was sent with the authority to speak for God, but Jesus possess all authority in heaven and earth. He is God.

- Moses was a great representative for the people as he communicated with God on their behalf at Mt. Sinai, but Jesus is the ultimate representative for God's people as he gave his own life that they may live eternally at peace with their God
- The author will spend a great deal of time demonstrating Jesus as the ultimate High Priest in the next several chapters

The point being made here is that the ministry that made Moses great is the same ministry that makes Jesus even greater. Moses was simply a type and a shadow of Jesus as the apostle and high priest of the Old Covenant. Just as the Old Covenant is inferior to the New Covenant, so also is Moses the mediator of the Old to Jesus the mediator of the New.

2. Jesus is Greater in Faithfulness (3:2)

² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

This is a brief and simple point that really serves as a segway into a greater point but I think it is worth mentioning. Moses was faithful in his ministry to fulfill his purpose as we just discussed. Numbers 12:7 God says, *Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.* However, Moses was still a human being with a fallen nature and he fell short at times. Jesus, on the other hand, never fell short but faithfully fulfilled his mission to perfection. This becomes a more significant point when you look more closely at their missions and their purposes.

3. Jesus is Greater as the Builder of God's House (3:4-6a)

³ For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴ (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) ⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

Moses was a servant of servants. His life was dedicated to serving God and serving God's people. He paid a price for that life. His life was much like the Old

Testament equivalent of Paul's New Testament life. It was filled with pain and suffering. Their ministries were very similar as well. Their whole purpose in life was to connect God's people to their God and facilitate a holy communion between the two. Much of the difficulty of this calling came from the fact that God's people are sinners with a sin nature that is always tempted to run away from God. It made their job very difficult. On top of that, Paul and Moses were also sinners with a sin nature that they had to constantly struggle with. In their calling to serve the house of God (God's chosen people) they had to deal with the fact that they were part of the house.

However, in contrast to that, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was part of the house as a man but he was also separate from the house as God. What does that mean for his ministry?

As a man Jesus was able to fulfill his ministry in the house of God by sympathizing fully with man's plight. Hebrews 2:14-18 *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

As God Jesus was able not only to be a servant in God's house, he was also its builder, which is something no human could ever do, including the Bible greats like Paul and Moses. Jesus died to build the House of God. 1 Peter 2:5 *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

4. Jesus is Greater in Position (3:5-6a)

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

Moses was a servant in God's house whose ministry was that of a forerunner. He spoke of things that pointed to the greater one, who would hold the position of Son. Jesus says in John 8:35 *The slave (servant) does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.* ³⁶ *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Servants come and go but sons remain as forever staples in the house. Moses was a temporary faithful servant whose sole purpose in life was to point to Jesus, the Son of God. Moses himself would plead with any man or woman not to think too highly of him, but let his life direct their gaze to Jesus. We can almost hear Moses speaking through this passage saying along with the author, "consider Jesus greater than me."

I want to reflect on this verse in closing. ***And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*** The house of God is not a building made with human hands. Our God cannot be confined to any structure, location, or time. The house of God is made up of people who hold fast their confession of the Lordship of Jesus and the good news of his salvation and his kingdom is ever on their lips. Jesus is the source of our hope in which we boast. Consider Jesus above any other human being and religious tradition.