

Hebrews Chapter 3

Verses 1-6: Jesus is both the Apostle and High Priest of the Christian faith. These titles do not involve His divine essence; they speak in regard to His superior ministry. Moses is very highly regarded by the Jews, so the author of Hebrews now attempts to make his argument for the superiority of Christ without belittling the ministry of Moses.

The author's use of the word "Apostle" (used of Christ only here), expresses the superiority of His commission, He being sent directly from God as a messenger. As High Priest, He is man's direct intercessor with God.

This section presents the superiority of Jesus over the highly-revered Moses. The Lord had spoken with Moses "face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11), and had given the law to him (Neh. 9:13-14). The commandments and rituals of the law were the Jews' supreme priorities, and to them Moses and the law were synonymous.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament refer to the commands of God as the "law of Moses" (Joshua 8:31; 1 Kings 2:3; Luke 2:22; Acts 13:39). Yet, as great as Moses was, Jesus was infinitely greater.

Hebrews 3:1 "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

"Holy brethren": The phrase occurs only here and (in 1 Thess. 5:27), where some manuscripts omit "holy." The writer addresses believers who have a "heavenly calling" (Phil. 3:14). They are elsewhere described as desiring a "heavenly country" (11:16), and as coming to "the heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22).

They are "holy" in the sense that they are set apart unto God and identified with the heavenly realm, citizens of earth.

"Calling": The reference, as always in the New Testament epistles, is to the effective summons to salvation in Christ (Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 7:21).

"Consider": The writer asks for the readers' complete attention and diligent observation of the superiority of Jesus Christ.

"Apostle and High Priest": An apostle is a "sent one" who has the rights, power and authority of the one who sends him. Jesus was sent to earth by the Father (John 3:17, 34; 5:36-38; 8:42). The topic of the High Priesthood of Christ, which was begun (in 2:17-18), and is mentioned again here, will be taken up again in greater detail (in 4:14 – 10:18).

Meanwhile, the writer presents the supremacy of Christ to Moses (verses 1-6), to Joshua (4:8), and to all other national heroes and Old Testament preachers whom Jews held in high esteem.

Jesus Himself spoke of His superiority to Moses in the same context in which He spoke of His being sent by the Father (John 5:36-38, 45-47; Luke 16:29-31).

Moses had been sent by God to deliver His people from historical Egypt and its bondage (Exodus 3:10). Jesus was sent by God to deliver His people from spiritual Egypt and its bondage (2:15).

“Of our profession”: Christ is the center of our confession of faith in the gospel, both in creed and public testimony. The term is used again (in 4:14 and 10:23; 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Tim. 6:12). In all 3 uses in Hebrews there is a sense of urgency.

Surely, the readers would not give up Christ, whom they had professed and reject what He had done for them, if they could understand the superiority of His person and work.

This is directed to the believers in Jesus Christ. In fact, this is directed to those who have made Jesus their Lord, as well as their Savior. Jesus is the great High Priest of all believers. He intercedes for us continually before the Father. Let us consider these followers of Jesus in the following verses.

2 Peter 1:3-9 "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;" "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;" "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

We can easily see that there is a lot to being the called of God. God expects our life to be so different from the life the people of the world live, that we will be called peculiar people.

Hebrews 3:2 "Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses [was faithful] in all his house."

“House”: The term refers to a family of people rather than a building or dwelling (verse 6; 1 Tim. 3:15). Those who were stewards of a household must above all be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). Both Moses (Num. 12:7), and Christ (2:17), faithfully fulfilled their individual, divine appointments to care for the people of God.

Numbers 12:7 "My servant Moses [is] not so, who [is] faithful in all mine house."

We see an almost identical Scripture in Numbers here. We know if we were looking at types and shadows, we would be able to say that Moses was a type of Christ. Moses led his people out of

bondage, Jesus led his people out of bondage. Mighty signs and wonders followed Moses, even mightier signs and wonders followed Jesus.

We do not want to belabor this point, but, the Father sent them both on a mission. The difference in the two (possibly the smallest difference), is that Jesus was the real Deliverer and Moses was His shadow. The last statement on this that I will make now is that Moses was leading his people to their promised land, Jesus is leading us to our eternal Promised Land.

Verses 3-6: More glory than Moses: Christ's superiority and greater glory are not based on His faithfulness (both were faithful, verse 2), but on His superior position. Christ is the One who hath "buildded" the house, whereas Moses is part of the house, being a servant in it (verses 3, 5). Christ is identified as a son over his own house.

The translation, "his own," is somewhat stronger than the Greek (autou). It is His house, but His house is the same as God's. Only one house is involved in these verses. It is not Moses' house, and it is not ours. It is God's.

Moses was a part of this one house. It is what Paul calls the household of God (Eph. 2:19; 1 Peter 4:17), or the household of faith (Gal. 16:10). It includes all believers of all time.

Verses 3-4: Moses was only a part of God's household of faith, whereas Jesus was the creator of that household (2 Sam. 7:13; Zech. 6:12-13; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5), and therefore is greater than Moses and equal to God.

Hebrews 3:3 "For this [man] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath buildded the house hath more honor than the house."

As we said above, Jesus is the real thing, Moses is His shadow. Jesus Christ was the Creator of all the world and everything in it. Moses, as great as he was, was still Jesus' creation.

Zechariah 6:12-13 "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name [is] The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:" "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

From the foundation of the world, Jesus was the Builder.

Hebrews 3:4 "For every house is buildded by some [man]; but he that built all things [is] God."

Ontological Argument for the Existence of God: The word ontological comes from the root word "being" and is a deductive argument that only indicates the probable existence of God. (See

Rom. 1:20 and Psalm 94 for stronger arguments). It reasons that the idea of a perfect and infinite Being who exists must have placed the idea in mankind.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

These Scriptures in John, which we have used over and over in this series of lessons, leave no doubt at all who built everything. Jesus Christ was the Word of God in heaven, as we read (in verse 14) above. We also read above, that the Word made everything. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read that even the heavens were created by God.

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Now go back and look at (Hebrews chapter 3:4), and you will see the full impact of what it is saying. I will show just one more Scripture and then go on.

Hebrews 1:2 "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

“Verses 5-6” “Servant ... Son”: The term for “servant” implies a position of dignity and freedom, not slavery (Exodus 14:31; Jos. 1:2). However, even as the highest-ranking servant, Moses could never hold the position of Son, which is Christ’s alone (John 8:35).

Hebrews 3:5-6 "And Moses verily [was] faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;" "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

“Spoken after”: Moses was faithful primarily as a testimony to that which was to come in Christ (11:24-27).

“If we hold fast”: This is not speaking of how to be saved or remain saved (1 Cor. 15:2); it means rather that perseverance in faithfulness is proof of real faith.

The person who returns to the rituals of the Levitical system to contribute to his own salvation proves he was never truly part of God’s household, whereas the one who abides in Christ gives evidence of his genuine membership in that household (Matt. 10:22; Luke 8:15; John 8:31; 15:4-6). The promise of God will fulfill this holding fast (1 Thess. 5:24; Jude 24-25).

“Hope”: This hope rests in Christ Himself, whose redemptive work has accomplished our salvation (Rom. 5:1-2).

1 Corinthians 6:19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

2 Corinthians 6:16 "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

We see above, that the salvation that Moses brought was for the body here on this earth. This salvation for the people was a shadow of the great salvation to come. Just as the first Adam was a man of the flesh and the second Adam (Jesus Christ), was Spirit; we see these 2 salvations were flesh and spirit. Let's look at one more Scripture that should really clear this up for us.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

This leaves no doubt that we Christians are Christ's abode here on the earth. Realizing this, how could we continue in sin?

Verses 7-11: The writer cites (Psalm 95:7-11), as the words of its ultimate author, the Holy Spirit (4:7; 9:8; 10:15). This passage describes the Israelites' wilderness wanderings after their delivery from Egypt. Despite God's miraculous works and His gracious, providential faithfulness to them, the people still failed to commit themselves to Him in faith (Exodus 17; Num. 14:22-23; Psalm 78:40-53).

The writer of Hebrews presents a 3-point exposition of the Old Testament passage:

- (1) Beware of unbelief (verses 12-19);
- (2) Be afraid of falling short (4:1-10); and
- (3) Be diligent to enter (4:11-13).

The themes of the exposition include urgency, obedience (including faith), perseverance, and rest.

The second of the five great warnings of Hebrews begin here (see 2:1). The first concerned neglect; this one warns against doubt. Do not doubt God's promise. As is common with the other warning passages, exhortations and illustrations are incorporated with the warning.

Israel's disbelief and hardness of heart, under the godly leadership of Moses and then Joshua, serve as examples.

Hebrews 3:7 "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,"

“Today”: The reference is to the present moment while the words of God are fresh in the mind. There is a sense of urgency to immediately give heed to the voice of God. This urgency is emphasized by repeating the reference to “today” from (Psalm 95:7). Three more times (verses 13, 15, 4:7), and is the theme of the writer’s exposition (2 Cor. 6:2).

Hebrews 3:8 "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:"

The terms “provocation” and “temptation” are taken from the Septuagint (Greek), reading of (Psalm 95), which are etymological translations of the Hebrew words, Meribah and Massah, respectively. These Hebrew terms are likewise descriptive translations, rather than the rendering of proper names.

Both terms originate with Moses’ smiting of the rock for water while in Rephidim (Exo. 17:1-7). Following that experience (verse 7), states concerning Moses, “And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?”

At that time, Israel had been out of Egypt only one month and had repeatedly witnessed God’s miraculous deliverance and provision. This incident became symbolic of Israel’s temptation (Massah), of God (Deut. 6:16). David (in Psalm 95), uses it to speak of Israel’s continuous rebellion throughout the 40 years in the wilderness.

Hebrews 3:9 "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years."

The Holy Ghost is saying, Learn from their mistakes. Whatever you do, do not harden your heart to God. God was grieved with that generation, because in spite of all the miracles He did, they still did not have faith in Him. Faith in God pleases Him more than anything else. We read at one point where God was so disappointed in man that He wished He had not made them.

Genesis 6:6 "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Our generation is doing the very same thing. Few people really are searching for God. Sin is rampant in our society. Movies are one of the downfalls of our people. Rock music has ruined our young people. Adultery is even laughed at now. The moral structure of our society is crumbling.

Drugs and alcohol are what our society is doing to hide from the reality that we are out of fellowship with God. If we do not change our ways, I believe God will turn His back on us. We are in the last days before the return of Jesus Christ. I will give a few Scriptures that show beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are in the last days.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy," "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good," "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

This leaves no doubt of not only what time we are living in, but also what we must do. We must separate ourselves from this type of life. One more Scripture and we will have this complete.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

God is a God of individuals. You do not have to follow the crowd. Repent and live for God. Live your faith in Jesus Christ every day. Be a separated people for Christ.

Hebrews 3:10 "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in [their] heart; and they have not known my ways."

"The generation of the wilderness", as the Jews often call them. And which they say was more beloved than any generation. And yet they will not allow them a part in the world to come (see Heb. 3:11). When God is said to be grieved with them, as speaking after the manner of men (see Gen. 6:5). 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 dissatisfaction of it, and determination to punish it. The cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry.

"And said, they do always 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 senselessness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion. Their lack 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.

Hebrews Chapter 3 Questions

1. Who is the Apostle spoken of in verse 1?

2. Who are the holy brethren addressed in verse 1?
3. What 2 things has Jesus called us to in 1 Peter 3:2?
4. Of whose nature can the Christians partake?
5. The corruption is in the world through what?
6. Name some of the virtues the Christian should have.
7. Who, from the Old Testament, was faithful in all his house, except Abraham?
8. Who, like Christ, delivered his people out of bondage?
9. Who is a type of shadow of Christ in this lesson?
10. Name at least 3 things in Moses' ministry that reminds us of Jesus' ministry.
11. In Hebrews 3:3, who is the Man spoken of?
12. Jesus is the ____ thing, Moses is His _____.
13. In Zechariah 6:12, what name is Jesus called?
14. Every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is ____.
15. What name was Jesus called in John 1:1?
16. Who made all things?
17. What was Jesus' name in heaven?
18. What is the temple of the Holy Ghost?
19. What was the difference in the salvation that Moses brought and the salvation that Jesus provided?
20. What Scripture, in Galatians, tells us that Christ lives in us, if we are a Christian?
21. What does God tell us not to do in Hebrews 3:8?
22. How many years did God show His greatness to the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land?
23. In Genesis 6:6, what did God repent of?
24. What do you personally think is the downfall of our present society?
25. What would you personally suggest that we should do to change all of this?