



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ♦ DEO ♦ GLORIA

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Sermon Notes

Consider Jesus Christ

Hebrews 3:1-6

March 8, 2009

¹Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ²who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. ³For 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.) ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶but 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.

- ❖ One of the most deadly aspects of fallen man is our elevation of others to divine, or at least, divine-like status. There is a since of irony in this fact. We would rather elevate fallible, selfish, finite, created beings – and even “worship” them – rather than elevating and worshipping the One True and Living God. The reasons for this are clear enough. We can see, touch, feel, and relate to other men. However, with God it is not that easy. We must trust, obey, submit, and humble ourselves.
- ❖ This sort of man-worship is rampant even in the church, as we elevate people of prestige, influence and wealth. We seem to even think that God is in some way impressed by the successes of some.
- ❖ Yet, this type of man-exaltation is nothing new. The Jews elevated Abraham and Moses. In fact, when Christ came to this earth, this was one of the greatest stumbling blocks of the Jews for they had so elevated the Old Testament patriarchs, that they were blinded to the truth of Jesus Christ – the One to whom the Patriarchs pointed.

- I. **Consider Jesus**
- II. **Jesus Christ is the Apostle**
- III. **Jesus Christ is the High Priest**
- IV. **Jesus Christ is More Worthy than Moses**
- V. **Jesus Christ is the Faithful Son**

I. Consider Jesus

- The author of Hebrews begins Chapter 3 by stating, “**Therefore**, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus...”
 - This first verse follows in context from the last several verses of Chapter 2. In the final passage of Chapter 2, Jesus Christ is revealed as a “merciful and faithful high priest”, and one who made “propitiation for the sins of the people.”
 - Also, Jesus Christ is the One who “has suffered when tempted” – yet was without sin – so “he is able to help those who are being tempted.”
 - **THEREFORE**, given these truths, the author of Hebrews is urging his fellow believers to “consider Jesus” – for He alone is able to help us and should be the object and center of our worship.
- Notice, as well, that the author’s fellow believers are called “holy brothers.”
 - That is, they are “holy” because they have been set apart **because of the propitiatory work of Jesus Christ and the regenerative work of the Person of the Holy Spirit**.
 - Next, they are called “brothers” because the author shares the same Father with them, that is, **God the Father**.
 - The Trinitarian nature of this truth is inescapable.
- Then, the author states that they all “share in a heavenly calling...”
 - In other words, the calling is not something that originates on this earth, but is rather found in heaven.
 - This is, of course, the place where the Resurrected Christ ascended into. It is a place that is perfect. And, it is a place **from which** and **to which** we all as “heavenly brothers” are called.
 - Consequently, since heaven is a perfect, unchanging place, so our calling is unchanging. For the original and modern-day believers, this provides further evidence of the assurance we have – not in ourselves – but in Christ and the heavenly calling on each of our lives.
 - Since we have a “heavenly calling” we know that our citizenship is ultimately not of this realm, not of this world.
- Then, the author of Hebrews explains **WHY** we should “consider Jesus”, giving **four main reasons**:

1. **Jesus Christ is the Apostle**
2. **Jesus Christ is the High Priest**
3. **Jesus Christ is More Worthy the Moses**
4. **Jesus Christ is the Faithful Son**

II. **Jesus Christ is the Apostle**

- The first reason why we should “consider Jesus” is because He is the Apostle.
- This is actually the only time this term is appropriated to Jesus Christ in the New Testament.
 - Although it may seem odd to refer to Jesus Christ as an Apostle, it is perfectly consistent with the actual meaning of the word and who Jesus Christ is, with respect to His redemptive work on our behalf.
 - The word *Apostle* literally means, “sent one.” Thus, Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to pay the ultimate price on our behalf.
 - And, Jesus faithfully and perfectly executed the mission given to Him by the Father.
 - Therefore, an Apostle is one sent to represent God before the people of God. This is why Jesus Christ could rightly say, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?” **John 14:9b**
 - Just as Jesus was sent by the Father, so the Apostles in the New Testament were sent by Jesus Christ Himself.

John 17:18: ^{“18} As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

III. **Jesus Christ is the High Priest**

- Next, Jesus is referred to as “high priest.”
 - The function of the high priest was to represent men before God and to intercede on their behalf through sacrifice and mediation.
 - Given the last few verses in Chapter 2, it is clear that Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled this function of a high priest, for He offered Himself as the “once-for-all” propitiatory sacrifice for His people.

IV. Jesus Christ is More Worthy than Moses

- ❑ **Verses 2-3**, speaking of Jesus, states, "...who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses..."
- ❑ It is the clear purpose of the author, here, to demonstrate Jesus Christ's superiority to Moses.
- ❑ **Moses was the great Lawgiver** of the Old Testament; however, that Law was simply a reflection of the One to come, who would fulfill that Law – Jesus Christ.
 - In fact, consider the vivid imagery in the Old Testament when Moses received the law. Moses was simply a witness, a spectator to the finger of God writing the Law on the stone tablets as a reflection of Himself.

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

- ❑ Furthermore, in reference to the two offices of **Apostle** and **High Priest**, Moses was the only one to combine these two offices.
 - It is certainly true that Moses' brother Aaron was the one appointed as the high priest of the nation of Israel; however, as F.F. Bruce asserts, "...it was Moses, not Aaron, who was Israel's true advocate with God."
 - Consider the aftermath to the idolatrous celebration surrounding the golden calf. It was Moses who interceded and pleaded with God on behalf of the guilty Aaron (along with the entire camp of Hebrews) (Exodus 32:11-14, 31).
- ❑ Consequently, in his fulfillment of the functions of apostle and priest, Moses, once again, foreshadowed Jesus Christ. This is why Christ is referred to as *the* Apostle and High Priest.

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- ❑ Now, the author of Hebrews will explain **why Jesus Christ is superior to Moses**.
- ❑ What is interesting, here, is that Jesus Christ and Moses are *compared*, with respect to faithfulness, but are *contrasted* with respect to honor.
- ❑ There is a definite reference, though, in this section to Numbers 12:6-8a:

Numbers 12:6-8a: "6And he said, 'Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. 7Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD.'"

- This Old Testament passage, in Numbers 12, demonstrates the uniqueness of Moses' position and function among the Old Testament saints.

- He was privileged to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.
- He was privileged to receive the Law from God.
- He was privileged to speak to God “mouth to mouth” and “behold His form.”
- He was privileged to be *a servant* in the house of the LORD.

- It is quite significant that the author of Hebrews **does not diminish or attempt to minimize the significance of Moses. In fact, He recognizes the faithfulness of Moses.**
- NOTE: The author refers to Moses as “faithful”; yet, Moses still failed in his goal to lead the people of God into the Promised Land. As “faithful” as he was, he was not *faithful enough*.

Thus, the author of Hebrews has no problem attributing honor to Moses. Yet, his purpose in honoring the ministry of Moses was to, once again, demonstrate how much more superior Jesus Christ is to even Moses – that is, the author of Hebrews exalts Christ that much more superior to Moses (who would have been considered the greatest of the Old Testament patriarchs).

- Certainly, in the demonstration of the superiority of Christ to Moses, the author is demonstrating the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old - Grace to Law.
- Then, in **Verses 3-6a**, the author of Hebrews writes, “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. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son.”
 - The author of Hebrews could not be more explicit than in **Verse 3**, when he writes, “For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses...”
 - The glory of Christ far outshines that of even Moses. For, Christ perfectly accomplished **everything** He purposed to do, in accordance with the will of the Father. Yet, Moses never achieved his goal of leading the people of God into the Promised Land.
- However, the primary reason given for the superiority of Jesus to Moses is **within the context of a BUILDING**.
 - The first comparison is simple: “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.**”

- The first comparison that the author of Hebrews makes is between the “**Builder and the Building**”:
 - In Verse 3, **the builder of the house is none other than Jesus Christ.**
 - This is clear from previous statements in this book regarding Christ’s nature:
 - ◆ He is the final revelation of God the Father;
 - ◆ He is the heir of all things;
 - ◆ He is the agent of Creation;
 - ◆ He is the radiance of the glory of God the Father;
 - ◆ He is the exact imprint of the nature of God the Father (He is fully God);
 - ◆ He sustains all of Creation by His word;
 - ◆ He made purification for our sins;
 - ◆ He is seated enthroned at the right hand of God the Father;
 - ◆ He is the eternal Son of God;
 - ◆ He is the firstborn of all Creation;
 - ◆ He is the One the glorious company of angels worship;
 - ◆ He is God;
 - ◆ He is the Davidic Messiah King;
 - ◆ He will rule forever!
 - ◆ He has conquered all His enemies, to include the final enemy: Death.
 - **What is clear from this passage is that, as the BUILDER, Christ is clearly Divine.** Yet, as is equally clear in Verse 6, a distinction exists between He and the Father.
- **Therefore, Jesus Christ is superior to Moses because He is the BUILDER OF THE HOUSE.**

○ However, there seems to be a clear association of Moses with the **house itself**. Consequently, this begs the question, “**WHAT IS THE HOUSE?**”

- This answer to this most important question becomes clearer as the readers continues on to Verses 5-6.
- Referring back to **Numbers 12:7**, in **Verse 5**, the author notes that Moses was a **faithful servant in the house of God**.
 - Then, the author of Hebrews states *why* Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant: “...**to testify to the things that were to be spoken later...**”

- In other words, the **role and function of Moses was to point forward “to the things that were to be spoken later...”**
- In fact, some scholars assert that the word “testify” or “testimony” echoes the purpose of the “tent of testimony” in Numbers 12:4, which was to testify to the One who would come and *tabernacle* among His people – Jesus Christ.
- In short, **the role of Moses was to point to Jesus Christ.**
- Yet, this Verse demonstrates the truth of the words of Jesus in Luke 24:44: “...everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

John 5:46-47: “⁴⁶For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

- In other words, the person and words of Moses foreshadowed Jesus Christ (further demonstrating Christ’s superiority to Moses).
- So, this being true, the reader can begin to understand the answer to the question of “What is the HOUSE spoken of here?”
- Some scholars believe that it is the **Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle** where Moses faithfully served. Others believe that the “house” was the **nation of Israel as a whole**, who was **God’s household** where Moses served.
 - I am of the firm belief that **BOTH ARE CORRECT, for the both point to the same Person – Jesus Christ.**
 - **We here see, once again, the continuity between the Old Covenant and the New.**

“...the old covenant looks forward to Christ with national Israel, and the new covenant looks back on Christ with the transnational church. But despite differences based on their redemptive-historical setting, Israel and the church are one.” Richard Phillips

- Yet, not only did the nation of Israel point forward to the Church, founded by Jesus Christ; but, the Tabernacle/Temple itself pointed as well, to Jesus Christ, the cornerstone and builder of the Church.

Consider, as well, the words of Gerald Bray, in his book, *Biblical Interpretation: The Gospel of Matthew* “**assimilates the historical experience of Israel as a nation to the life of Jesus – the ultimate in typological fulfillment. Like Israel, Jesus goes into the wilderness to be tested, and his twelve disciples represent the twelve tribes [Israelites] who are sent out to conquer the land.**”

Ephesians 2:19-22: “¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

1 Peter 2:9-10: “⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Again, Phillips writes,

“...Old Covenant Israel is the bud of which the New Covenant Church is the flower.”

- Consider, as well, the words of the Apostle Paul, who states, “**We are the temple...**”

2 Corinthians 2:16: “¹⁶What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.
¹⁷Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,
¹⁸and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty.’”

- Notice, however, that here the emphasis is on the corporate nature of the Temple of God. That is, Paul’s emphasis – as well as the writer of Hebrews – is that, *collectively*, the Church is the Temple.
 - Although it is true that there is an individual application (for, individually, as well, our bodies are God’s Temple), we must not forget the tremendous emphasis the Scripture places on the collective unity of the Body of Christ – which is the Temple.
 - Unfortunately, the modern Church is overly individualistic – placing more emphasis on the subjective experience of the individual rather than the objective truth found in the midst of the corporate body.
 - May we never forget that our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always exercised within the context of the collective Body of Christ.
- The Church is, indeed, a building, with Jesus Christ as our cornerstone.

“The **cornerstone** (or foundation stone) concept is derived from the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.” www.wikipedia.org

V. Jesus Christ is the Faithful Son

- Consider the prepositions in Verses 5-6, with respect to “God’s house”:

“...Moses was faithful *in all God’s house as a servant*...but Christ *is faithful over God’s house as son*.”

- From this passage, several truths are made quite clear:
 - Moses was a servant in the **past**; Christ’s work is **now**.
 - Also, Moses was a servant **in** God’s house; Christ is **over** God’s house.
 - Finally, Moses was merely a *servant*; Christ is the **Son**.
- The concept of Christ’s **Sonship**, once again, comes to the fore. Only Jesus Christ is the unique, eternal Son of God. He is fully divine. And as such, He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things – to include the House of God.

“The faithfulness of Christ is repeated to bring out His superiority over Moses’ by virtue of His Sonship. *As a son* echoes the main them of the opening part of the epistle. The writer is impressed by the thought that our high priest is none other than God’s Son. This will be evident at several points in the development of his discussion. To him the Sonship of Jesus adds incomparable dignity to the high-priestly office.” Donald Guthrie

- Not only did Jesus Christ create the House of God, that is the people of God, as Son, **the people of God are His inheritance as well**.
- But, one must consider *how* it was that Jesus created/established the house of God – that is the Church.
- He did so as a faithful Son, out of the zeal He had for His Father.
- Consider John 2, when Jesus cleanses the Temple:

“¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, ‘Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.’ ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ ¹⁸So the Jews said to him, ‘What sign do you show us for doing these things?’ ¹⁹Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’”

- ❑ Therefore, out of love (Zeal) for His Father, Jesus Christ fulfilled His will perfectly. Yet, this obedience led Him directly to the cross, where, He, the fulfillment of the Temple of God, was destroyed. However, in three days He rose again.
- ❑ And it was through His death, resurrection and ascension that Jesus Christ established the Church, with Himself as the cornerstone.

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- ❑ The author of Hebrews concludes this passage by stating, “And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”
 - This conditional statement, like several in the Book of Hebrews, has led some to believe that we can fall away from the faith, or lose our salvation.
 - Yet, that is not what this Verse is teaching.
 - The point is that **if our faith is genuine, it will persevere to the end. In fact, this is how we know that we are part of God’s household – if we persevere.**
 - It can also be said, as well, though, that this passage is, once again, one of the God-ordained means to His pre-ordained ends. In other words, this passage may well serve the purpose of causing true believers to remain true to the faith.

Yet, ultimately, the way we persevere to the end is through our preservation by God. And we know this when we “**consider Jesus**” the One who has gone before us.

Revelation 21:3: “³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’”