

CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST

TEXT: HEBREWS 3:1-6

Introduction:

1. We saw in chapters 1 and 2 that Christ is better than the angels.
2. In a previous message, I quoted William Newell, who wrote:
“Jewish minds thought much of angelic glory. They had received the law as ordained by ministry of angels (Acts 7:53). They were wont, therefore, to regard with awe and wonder these obedient messengers of God’s power. There can be no stronger proof of this than John’s temptation to worship one (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9). Hence the weight of the further testimony here to Christ’s glory.”
3. Jews also had high regard for Moses. Moses’ name is mentioned 848 times in the Bible – 768 times in the Old Testament, and 80 times in the New Testament.
4. To many people, Moses represents Judaism. Often in Scripture, the law is referred to as “the law of Moses.”
5. John 1:17 says, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
6. The key word in the epistle to the Hebrews is “better.” The word “better” is found 13 times in the epistle (cf. 1:4).
7. Here in our text, it is said that our Lord is better than Moses. Moses was sent by God to deliver the Israelites from bondage in Egypt.
8. But Christ was sent to deliver the whole world from bondage to sin (John 3:16, 17). The word “Wherefore” (3:1) is there to remind us that the author of this epistle is continuing his argument that Christ is better than anything Judaism has to offer (cf. 2:1; 4:1; 6:1).
9. The author (probably Paul) is writing to “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” (3:1). The word “heavenly” is found six times in this epistle.
 - “the heavenly gift” (6:4) -- salvation
 - the “shadow of heavenly things” (8:5) – referring to the tabernacle
 - “the heavenly things” (9:23) – referring to the heavenly tabernacle
 - an heavenly country (11:16) – the new Jerusalem, called...
 - “the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22)

10. In the book of Hebrews, the heavenly is contrasted with the earthly, and the heavenly is always far better.
11. The Israelites were God's earthly people, but the NT church is God's heavenly people.

I. CHRIST IS OUR APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST (3:1).

1. An "apostle" is one who is sent by God (cf. John 17:3, 18).
2. Christ is our great high priest (2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1, 3; 9:7, 11, 25; 10:21; 13:11).
3. Both the apostle and the high priest were appointed by God, and did not take the office on themselves. Both were representative offices, in which the holders were acting on behalf of others.
4. "The apostle represents God to man; a priest represents man to God. The Lord Jesus Christ combines both functions" – John Phillips.
5. This brings us to verses 2 & 3, where a comparison is made between Christ and Moses. Moses performed the function of an apostle in acting as God's representative to the people. He also served as their intercessor before God.
6. However, Moses was never referred to as an apostle or a high priest. His brother Aaron was the first high priest.
7. Christ is shown to be superior to Moses in perfectly fulfilling both functions – as an apostle sent from God, and as our great high priest (cf. 4:14-16).

II. CHRIST WAS COUNTED WORTHY OF MORE GLORY THAN MOSES

1. The word "house" is used here in different ways. In Numbers 12:7, the LORD says, Moses was "faithful in all mine house." Here in Hebrews 3:5, it is "his house." This refers to the tabernacle.
2. But Hebrews 3:6 says, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we..." This refers to the church.
3. Hebrews 3:2 says, "Moses was faithful in all his house," and verse 4 says, "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."
4. The Bible teaches Christ is God (cf. Hebrews 1:8). Therefore, Christ "built all things."
5. Referring to Christ, John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
6. In Matthew 16:18, our Lord said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

7. First Timothy 3:15 says “the house of God” is “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Christ built this house, which is something no man could ever accomplish, even a great man like Moses.
8. Moses was faithful (3:2), but Christ is a “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (2:17).
9. Moses laid the foundation of Israel’s theocracy. Moses was in charge of building the tabernacle, with all its furnishings.
10. Moses was a great builder, but Christ is the builder. John 1:3 says, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
11. You will recall that when our Lord was up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Elijah and Moses, Peter suggested building three tabernacles – one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah (Matthew 17:4).
12. Then God spoke from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5). Moses and Elijah were great men of God, but they should not be put on the same level as the Lord Jesus Christ.
13. Christ is superior to Moses in every way, because Christ is God.

III. MOSES WAS A SERVANT OF GOD, BUT CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD

1. Here is another contrast: Moses was a servant in the house (3:5), whereas Christ is a Son over the house – “over his own house” (3:6).
2. “For a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after” (3:5) refers to the fact that Moses was in many ways a picture and type of Christ, but the antitype is always greater than the type.
3. Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”
4. Christ is “like unto” Moses in many ways, but He is far greater than Moses.
5. Other types and foreshadowings of Christ would include the manna from heaven, the Rock that was smitten, the brazen serpent, etc.
6. Luke 24:27 says, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

CONCLUSION:

1. There are several warnings given in this epistle, and one is found in Hebrews 3:6 ff— “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore...”
2. William Newell wrote, “These warnings of **Hebrews** are not given to create uncertainty, but to avoid presumption and carelessness.”
3. People interpret these warning passages in different ways, but one thing is certain – holding fast in the faith proves our faith is real.