

## 6. Messiah, Moses, and me

January 18, 2015

I have no idea what the great godly man Moses looks like. But honestly, I would have difficult time to think any other look than the appearance by Charlton Heston, who portrayed Moses in the movie "The Ten Commandments." When I get to heaven and see the real Moses, I probably will tell him, "You don't look like Moses."

The followers of Judaism holds Moses to be the greatest prophet, and in some senses the founder of the Jewish people. He is most notable for leading the Hebrews out of Egypt and receiving the Torah from God at Mt. Sinai, establishing Mosaic Law and wrote the first five Books of the OT. If you ask any Jew to name the most important person in the history of Judaism, they would not name Abraham or king David, but Moses.

When the author of the Book of Hebrews was writing this letter to the first century Jews who were living in Israel, he knew that the presence of Moses in their minds was still big, if not as big as the presence of Jesus due to the deep tradition they were in.

It was important that the author of this Book convince his readers that Jesus Christ is superior to Moses, because there were many early Christians in Israel struggling from physical, emotional, and financial persecutions of other Jews for their choice of Christianity.

In chapter 1, the author told us that Jesus is more superior than Moses, prophets, and the angels. Then, he, in the typical Hebrew literary style, elaborated the comparison between Jesus and the angels further in chapter 2. And now, at the beginning of chapter 3, he is revisiting what he stated in chapter 1 – the superiority of Jesus over Moses.

### A. CONSIDER JESUS

*Hebrews 3:1-2 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.*

The word 'therefore' is a dovetail word. It needs to be connected with the things that were stated previously. In our last Sunday study, the Lord spoke to our hearts that Jesus who not only faithfully sacrificed Himself to save our eternal lives, but also helps us win in our day to day struggles and temptations.

Since we have a faithful and merciful High Priest who comes to our aid when we cry out, we must follow the advice that comes in the rest of the verses.

I want all of you to pay attention to the word 'consider'. It is more than just 'thinking briefly.' Actually, it is far deeper than the English word 'ponder'. The Greek word for 'consider' here is "katanoeo" which can be defined as "to think deeply." I find this word used in one particular place in Matthew:

*Matthew 7:3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?*

But consider, or think deeply what? Think deeply about our Jesus, the Messiah, the Apostle, and the High Priest who is superior to anyone and anything in the universe.

Some of you might get yourself all wound up because this verse calls Jesus 'the Apostle.' He is not talking about 'a member of the office of the apostles of Jesus Christ.' The definition of 'apostle' is "One sent forth" and our Jesus was the One sent forth by God the Father. And He is our High Priest. Interestingly, the Latin word for 'priest' is "pontifex" where we get our English word "pontiff." "Pontifex" means "bridge builder." Jesus is the "Bridge Builder" between God and man.

*1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*

As v2 states, Moses was faithful in all God's house. Yes, he was, but not completely. If he was faithful in everything, he would have gone into the Promised Land with the Israelis. Because he didn't represent the Lord properly at Kadesh, he couldn't. He was supposed to speak to the rock so that the Israelis would have water they needed, but in his temper tantrum he struck the rock instead. But Jesus was faithful to God the Father who appointed Him in every way. In other words, the Lord was superior to Moses.

That's not all. But there are more. I think that the infomercial people learned this from the author of the Book of Hebrews.

## **B. JESUS, SUPERIOR TO MOSES**

*Hebrews 3:3-6a For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house,*

Did you notice that there is one word that is repeated six times here? "House". When you study the Bible, if you notice that a particular word repeated several times, you really need to pay attention to that word. Because the Lord is trying to speak to your hearts through that word.

For most people, God's house gives a connection to a place of worship, like this place. But technically speaking, the early church never referred to a building as God's house, rather His people. That's us. Moses ministered to Israel, the people of God in the OT, but today, Jesus Christ ministers to His church, the people of God.

I want you to pay attention to one word 'servant' in v5:

In the NT, the majority of Greek words for 'servant' is either "pais" or "doulos". But, in here, the author of Hebrews used a very special word, "therapon." It appears only once in the NT. It means "an attendant, servant: of God," but it is designated for Moses. Obviously, he used this with the Jewish readers in mind who thought of him very highly.

The author of this Book is making a list of side by side comparisons between the Son of God, Jesus and the servant of God, Moses:

- Moses was a servant of the house. – v5
- Jesus is a Son over the house. – v6
  
- Moses was a member of the household. – v5
- Jesus built the house. – v3

- Moses spoke about things to come. – v5
  - Jesus brought the fulfillment of these things. – v6
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- Moses knew God personally, even conversed with Him face-to-face, like friends.  
– Exodus 33:11
  - Jesus is God. – How much time do you have? Too many to list

The bottom line? Jesus is superior to Moses, though the ancient rabbis considered him to be the greatest man ever, greater than the angels. The author of the Book of Hebrews was not criticizing Moses, but he helped these Hebrew people look at Moses from the right perspective.

This brings a very important point for us to think about:

We are all servants in God's house if you are a born-again Christian. All of us have spiritual, physical, and financial gifts, which God has entrusted to us for the edification of others. We are responsible for what we do with those gifts.

*Luke 19:12-24 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'*

Some of you might say, "I don't think that I have any gift from the Lord." Yes, you do and we ALL do. You just don't know it because you have not served the Lord in any form or shape until now. You come to the church, sing a few songs, listen to the teachings, and fly out the door before you have to talk with anyone. You don't give your time for God to use you in ministry for others. By doing so, you are doing the exact same thing as the third servant who put away a mina and gave it back to the master, did. Why would you be like that?

I wholeheartedly believe that the ministry that starts right after the service for a half an hour is equally important as the teaching ministry that I do. Get to know others and let others know you. How can you help others when you don't even know their names? Talk to someone you have not met yet. Hang around, I promise, nobody will bite you. Are you feeling uncomfortable because of what I said? I am not condemning you, the Lord is speaking to you and convicting you now. You'd better listen.

### **C. BUT THERE IS A CLAUSE**

*Hebrews 3:6b whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

In the OT, the Lord God promised to the Israel people that if they'd honor Him in their worship and obey His commandments, He would protect them and provide what they need. That is "conditional promise" which strictly depended on their responses. That conditional promise came with "if" clause. The definition of 'clause' is "a distinct article or provision in a contract, treaty, will, or other formal or legal written document." As we know, they miserably failed it because of their idolatry and disobedience throughout the centuries.

Many very intelligent Bible students, especially those who hold fast or against the "security of eternal salvation" like to argue that they are right and anyone else who disagrees with them are wrong. Obviously, I am NOT one of those intelligent people, thus I don't like to argue. In my humble opinion, if you stay close to Jesus for the rest of your life, you will never find out whether you are going to lose salvation or not. It is NOT THE main point of the Christian theologies.

And the author of this Book is not talking about that here. Of course, those who would like to argue will say, "How do you know that the author was not talking about that?" Remember what I taught you. Whenever you read the Bible, do not take one verse out of context. Always stay in context. The theme of the whole Book of Hebrews is about the finished work of Christ and His heavenly ministry that guarantees our eternal salvation.

Here are the questions we should ask of ourselves: What kind of confidence should they and we hold fast? And the confidence in what? The object of our confidence is far more important than the confidence itself.

The definition of the word 'confidence' here is "freedom in speaking, openness." When we are free to speak with boldness and openness because we are allowed through the grace of God, we have our confidence in Jesus. We should not have confidence in ourselves, because we are way too prone to fail, but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ who never fails.

Because of this confidence in Christ, we can have inexpressible joy and unquenchable hope regardless of our circumstances. That's why many martyrs who died in the name of Christ could endure the tortures and difficulties to the end. They stood tall in spite of surmounting persecutions day after day, month after month, and year after year.

### **D. APPLICATIONS**

**1) We often allow our carnal desires or the respect for another human to compete with the Savior for the throne in our hearts. Get them outta there.**

*Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

**2) We all have gifts from the Lord. Let's use them to minister to OTHERS for God's glory TODAY.**

**3) We should not have confidence in ourselves, because we are way too prone to fail, but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ who never fails.**