

## Hebrews 3:1-6

As we started this book, we were almost immediately taken to the case being made that Jesus is greater than the angels. But beginning in [Ch. 3](#) the focus changes to Jesus being greater than *Moses*. The reason this is important is because **the Jewish people had a way of making idols of things that were to be pointing them to Jesus.**

- One such example is when they sinned in the wilderness and were cursed and bitten by snakes because they complained against God and Moses. So God (because of His mercy) gave Moses instruction to make a bronze staff with a serpent on it. And whoever looked at the staff after being bitten would live. **So they named the staff “Nehushtan (“bronze thing”)” and burned incense to it (2 Kings 18:4).** So Hezekiah had to destroy it. And (as we will see with all the OT accounts [[Heb. 10:7](#)]) **this staff was supposed to be pointing them to Jesus who would hang on the cross to deliver us ([John 3:14](#)).** But, instead, they misplaced their worship and trust so that they worshipped what God had created **instead of worshipping God.**
- This is the case with Moses. So now the focus is shifted to the Holy Spirit building this case.

And as a great warning for us right up front, **be careful to not let things that were to point you and others to Jesus to become something you start worshipping** (including ministries, giftings, people... ). Not only is it wrong to do so, but the reason it is wrong is because **you will find yourself pushing Jesus to the side to worship created people or things.** This is more common than I think many want to admit.

And as we tackle [verses 1-6](#) today, we will see it also highlights the faithfulness of both Moses and Jesus, while showing the contrast. But this conversation about faithfulness is far from over when we finish today’s study. It is a powerful emphasis through [4:13](#) and beyond.

- And when we pick back up next time, what we’re going to find is that **faith and faithfulness go hand in hand (3:12).** If you don’t have and keep your genuine faith in Jesus, faithfulness is going to be a problem.
- But we will also see that **faith and faithfulness do not equal perfection,** unless of course we’re talking about on God’s side. He is perfectly and constantly faithful. But even the most faithful person is not **perfect in their faithfulness to God.** That’s a reality we all need to live with on this side of glory.

So now place all of this on the backdrop of why this letter was written in the first place. The Jewish believers were being pressured to either **1)** denounce Jesus and return to Judaism (the Law and sacrifices), or **2)** simply to reintegrate the Law and sacrifices into, or alongside, their faith in Jesus. Today we term this as “watering down” your faith.

- And as we continue in this letter, we will be told how either approach would be a departure from the faith. **And therefore, a faith that won’t save you.**
- So the case being made is **1)** that Jesus is who Moses was pointing to. And **2)** that faith in Moses (who represented the Law and sacrifices) was a misplacement of faith. Moses was a faithful man, but **he’s not God.** On the other hand, Jesus is!
- So in order to dissuade these Jewish believers from pursuing peace at the cost of their faith, the Holy Spirit had to make this case clear. And He does.

Folks, on the surface some might think this doesn’t pertain to us at all, because we are not putting our faith in the Law and sacrifices, and therefore elevating Moses to a place he doesn’t belong. But history shows us we have a lot to learn here. **First,** I have watched far too many well-meaning Christians, at some point, believe they needed to keep the Law, even desiring to become more “Jewish”. There is even what has been called the Hebrew Roots Movement. **And that my friends is a complete departure from the faith in Jesus ([Gal. 5:4](#)).**

- Now those are both examples of people choosing to go backwards, thinking they are moving forwards. **2)** But others (placed under pressure from their families or communities) have been pushed to water down their faith, or add something to it in order to fit in, make peace, or simply have an easy place to belong. And this letter should serve as a warning and encouragement to us to not even consider doing so.
- Folks, that idea of “easy believism” is misguided. What we hear in the bible is that **placing your faith in Jesus will give eternal peace within, but intensify the war from without.** Jesus was even rejected by His own family (including his mom who heard directly from the angel Gabriel and others, and saw the miracles even before His birth). We have the bible to show us this reality ([Mark 3:20-21 & 31-35, \[John 7:1-5\]\(#\)](#)). And we have

been told many, many times in the bible that believers will face **persecution** not just from their own countrymen, but also from their families.

- Folks, to follow Jesus requires real and enduring faith. And this should serve as a warning to anyone who is considering, or has already begun to **1)** water down their faith, **2)** add to their faith, **3)** or retreat from their faith **in order to appease another, to simply refuse.**

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

As we come to **verse 2** in just a minute, we will revisit what we learned last time, when we were told Jesus identified us as His brothers whom He was not ashamed to declare (3:11-12). And spoke of us as being one with Him (3:11). If you thought there's no way to make that better, brace yourself, for here He adds two more pieces to this reality.

- The **first** is in calling us *holy brethren*. Now being "*holy*" simply identifies that we are set apart. But it's what we are set apart unto that matters. And what He is saying is **we are set apart for our eternal relationship with God, through Jesus!**
- Which brings us to the **next** piece, which is we are set apart to be *partakers of the heavenly calling*. Now this certainly began the day we became followers of Jesus. And the call to faithfulness (which we will come to in a bit) certainly makes that point (today, faithfulness will set you apart). But that's not where the point ends, **for there are parts and pieces of this calling that are still awaiting those who are in Jesus family.**

Folks, if these things don't motivate and excite you, you might not be the brethren or partakers of the promises of Jesus. Are you set apart now? If not, why would you be set apart then? In fact, why would you want to be? **If your affections aren't for Jesus and the life He has for us now, what would make them be in the future?** The way you are living now has a lot to say about what (or Whom) you really believe in.

But for those who are set apart, the best is yet to come. And it gets way better! So what do we do in the waiting? Well, the main thing is to **consider Jesus**. Not just one time, but **all the time!** Because He is *the Apostle and High Priest of our confession*. Now for the Jewish believers, **they had to make the transition the OT was pointing them to** (which was Jesus), **1)** and away from the Law (Moses being the main figure), **2)** the Priesthood (tied to the sacrificial system), and **3)** the prophets, who also had an incredible standing with them (as they should have).

- But here's the thing **some might miss, which these Jewish believers would not have.** In Judaism the **prophets** represented God in speaking to the people (they were Gods spokesmen [1:1]) while the **priest** represented the people before God (5:1).
- Moses was never a priest because even though he was a Levite, the high priesthood went through the line of Aaron. But Moses was a prophet. And in Judaism Moses is still considered the greatest of prophets.
- But what the author of **Hebrews** is saying in calling Jesus the *Apostle* (meaning "*one who was sent in order to represent the One who sent Him*"), **and** the *High Priest*, is that Jesus fulfilled what neither Moses or anyone else had or could. **He both represented God before the people and the people before God.** And although there is certainly **no diminishing of Moses position here**, the point is clear that **Jesus is greater than Moses**. Because **1)** Jesus is our **High Priest** *who forever makes intersection for us* (7:25), **2)** and the message He brought from the Father **was the last one ever needed.**

But before we move to **verse 2**, don't miss this one powerful word that is the starting point of everything for those who want what Jesus is offering. And that is **confession**. Now this is not the idea of what you confess while in a little booth with a priest sitting in the next booth over. **Confession here is intricately tied to faith** (and continued faith).

- But **it all begins with activated faith**. And **Rom. 10:9** tells us, "*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*"...
- But this is not the end of our **confession** of faith, for we are now to walk the rest of our new life in faith. And continue in that faith we initially exercised in Jesus (2 Cor. 5:7).
- And that **confession** is not just to be outward at conversion. We are to keep confessing to this reality before the saved and the unsaved (1 John 4:15, Matt. 10:32).

Do you have a **confession to make**? Not of some wrongdoing (although repentance is a part of activated faith), but rather a confession of **1)** who He is, **2)** what He has done, **3)** and is doing? **That's a confession of your faith.**

<sup>2</sup> *who (Jesus) was faithful to Him (the Father) who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.*

I think to understand what is going on here, we first need to ask what is meant by *house*? Well, in a more modern understanding we might use the terms **household, family, or people** (speaking of a specific group of people).

- For Moses it spoke of the people of his nation, who were set apart by God, to be the people of God.
- But it goes so much deeper with those who are in Jesus.
- So, in addition to calling us holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling today, He now adds the **family (or household) component**.

Now I want to be clear. When we talk about the family of God, it is exactly that. Our congregation operates like a family. And I believe it's supposed to be that way. **But we are just a fragment of Jesus family**, for that family includes every blood bought saint who has ever given their life to Jesus. So let me tell you why this is important. **Some have settled for far less than Jesus will settle for.**

- There are groups who have decided their home church or denomination are the only family they want or need. And they even go further than that. Some think theirs is the only true family of God. **And just like the Jewish people who began to idolize and worship that which God gave them to point them to Him, this can produce the same result.**
- The Corinthians had this problem, and Paul wouldn't let it go. They were creating factions based on who they claimed as their bible teacher (1 Cor. 1:10-15). And a faction is simply another word to speak of **divisions**. Now in that time the church and communities were not nearly as numerous as they are today, so there was commonly one congregation per community. Today is different for us.
- So, this is not saying all of Battle Ground should only have one congregation. But it is a warning for us to not reduce to our liking or pride, what God intends to keep multiplying. **Don't turn something good into an idol that God intends to use to simply lead people to worship Jesus.**

And in this verse, **we also hear of the faithfulness of both Jesus and Moses**. And the reference to Moses faithfulness over his household comes directly **from what God had said about him** in Num. 12:7. So, as we're looking at the contrast, **do first see that God spoke of Moses' faithfulness like no one else's**. But with that we also need to acknowledge what I mentioned in the introduction. And that is that **God does not equate faithfulness with perfection when it comes to people**. Moses also had a few of those not so proud moments.

- **1)** There was the time when he failed to circumcise his own son and God was about to kill him, so his wife had to quickly do it with a sharp stone to save him (Ex. 4:24-26). **Faithful does not mean perfect.** **2)** And then there was the time when he was to take Aaron and the rod to go to the rock and ask God to bring forth water for the people. But the people were accusing and cursing both Moses and God, **so he lost it and struck the rock twice, and included himself in the bring forth of the water.** (Num. 20:2-13).
- Now, this brings in two important pieces we have already discussed. The **first** of which is revealed in learning that because of the way Moses handled this, God did not let him enter the promised land with the people. And the reason why, is similar to what we have heard a few times already today, and that is that **the rock that brings forth living water was a picture of Jesus, who was the once and forever sacrifice, who would be stricken on the cross one time for our sin. Then it was finished** (1 Cor. 10:4, Ex. 17). Moses distorted the picture of what the OT was pointing towards. And we should see from this that **leading and teaching Gods people is serious business to Him.**
- **2)** But the other piece is found in **verse 12 of Num. 20**, and is something mentioned in the introduction, saying "**Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them**". His act of unfaithfulness in this incident was due to a lack of faith (inbelief). You cannot sperate the two.

So Moses faithfulness is monumental among all people, **but only Jesus' faithfulness is perfectly intact. He has never been unfaithful. You can count on Him 100%.** And besides showing the main point, **which is Jesus is greater than Moses**, we should take hold of an important truth; **it is complete nonsense to idolize human leaders or place your ultimate trust in them. Nor should we over scrutinize them for being human. Only God deserves our complete trust and worship.** No one (including yourself) can walk through this world perfectly.

<sup>3</sup> *For this One (Jesus) has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.* <sup>4</sup> *For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*

So again, we are drawn back to **Ch. 1** where a clear profession of **Jesus as Creator God** was made. And the logical outworking of that is that **Moses was made by Jesus, who is God**.

- Because of that, **Jesus the creator is worthy of more honor than the creation**- Moses.
- Now when Moses was up on **Mount Sinai**, he had an encounter with God, and a limited amount of God's glory. So when Moses came down to speak to the people, we're told his *face shone* (Ex. 34:29).
- But we understand **Jesus has always had that glory** while **Moses only received it after coming into the presence of God** (his was a temporary and fading glory). And just as **you don't praise a painting for creating itself**, but instead praise the painter who brought that work to life, the writer of Hebrews is now reminding them to give the honor to Jesus, who made Moses, **and gave him the limited portion of glory** that Moses then displayed before the people.

So we know that Moses household was the nation of Israel. But he did not build that, Jesus did!

- And Jesus built His own household - twice. **First** He created people and all we interact with. **Then** (after we burned that proverbial house down), He build restitution with the Father, **resulting in an eternal family where He is the head** (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:17-19).
- And who lives in Gods house? **His children**. They (we) will make our home with Him forever (John 8:35).

*<sup>5</sup> And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, <sup>6</sup> but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm to the end.*

Here we find the first direct reference to the *testimonies* of the OT *speaking afterward* of how they were pointing to Jesus over everything else. Later these will be identified as shadows, types, or fulfillments (Col. 2:16-17, Heb. 8:5 & 10:1). But here the case is clear. **1)** Moses was a *servant*- Jesus is the *Son*, **2)** Moses was sent to deliver the message of God - Jesus came because He is God, **3)** Moses came to lead the people out of Egypt and gave them the Law which proved to them they could never keep it- Jesus came to fulfill the law to set people free forever, **4)** Moses was a faithful but not perfect leader of the people - Jesus is 100% faithful, even in submitting to the cross. **And we have Jesus!!!**

But there is a caveat to being able to identify as being in the family of God, and that is *if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end*. And so, he would say to these believers, "if you are of Christ's household, *hold fast*", or "don't pull back from **1)** the faith (confidence) in what you have received **and 2)** the faith in what He has promised *is still to come*".

- And I personally like that he mentions for the believer, this is to be done in *rejoicing of the hope*. For, the great desire of the believer *isn't to hold on to what we have here, but to be with Him there*.
- And that *confidence that our hope is not in vain*, but secure in God's promises, should cause *rejoicing* to be the normal state of the believer. *Even when life's circumstances appear contrary to that hope*.

But what do we do with the "*if*" found in **verse 6**? It's a powerful little stand out, with a lot of potential punch. I say this because it leads many to ask if this is indicating someone can "lose their faith". And I think that's an interesting way to term that because **faith** is so focal to this question. And again, *we find faith and faithfulness do have a strong tie*.

- First, do remember this letter is written to the Jewish believers in Jesus who were being called back to Judaism by their families and communities, who were putting a lot of pressure on them (Again, some of you know how that feels). *And I would ask you right now, what would you not be willing to lose to follow Jesus?* If there is something on that list, you are in trouble, because that is certainly what the enemy will throw at you. And *his goal is to get you to let go of your faith by getting you to hang onto something else* (anything else) *more tightly*.
- But I can tell you personally (and I'm hoping you are right there with me) *that I am not worried about the possibility of losing my faith because I'm not going anywhere, or clinging onto anything tighter than I am Jesus!* My full confidence is in Him and Him alone. I have no confidence in the world, its leaders, its promises, or even my own self. **But I trust Him completely**.
- If you are worried about losing your salvation, it's time to loosen your grip on everything else and hold fast your confidence in Him. *Then the question becomes irrelevant for you*. Let the theologians argue it out (although we will cover it more in this letter. Especially in **Ch. 6**). Folks, just cling to Jesus.