

Consider Jesus

Hebrews 3:1-6

Introduction

When my Grandfather Geraci died my father asked me an all important question; “Which religion is right?”

My father and his father grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition.

The writer of Hebrews is writing to Hebrew (Jewish) believers who are struggling with the pressures of persecution and are considering abandoning faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah or at least identifying themselves with first century Judaism in order to provide relief from the pains of identifying with Yeshua as Messiah.

The writer of this book believes Christianity is superior to Judaism because Christ is superior to Moses. Why in the world would these people want to go back to Judaism when the offer of Christ is greater in every way? What does Moses really have to offer? What does Christ really have to offer?

The writer has already declared that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets (1:1-3); angels (1:4-2:18) and now Moses (3:1-4:13). In this chapter the writer emphasizes that Jesus is greater in His office (vv.1-2); in His ministry (vv.3-6) and later in the all important rest that Jesus gives (vv.7-19). Moses was a servant; but Christ was a Son. Moses was called by God and Jesus was sent by God. Moses sinned, Christ lived a sinless life.

Moses ministered using types, shadows, symbols, but Jesus is the fulfillment of those things!

At the heart of Judaism is Moses as the giver of freedom from slavery; the great law giver; the laws that would govern Israel; Moses was the great nation builder; and the great friend of God. In the eyes of the Jews Moses had been appointed by God, faithful to God, and no one was greater than Moses.

But now the author invites us to consider Jesus.

Consider Jesus (v.1)

Hebrews 3:1-6 (NKJV) Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

The expression “consider” means to observe with attention to the details. The Greek word is *katanoeo*—*kata down—but in compounds also has the intensive or perfective force*. We might think of this as put on your thinking cap—or use all your mind’s faculties to carefully consider Christ.

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But before we do that let's look briefly at the description of the readers! They are called *holy brethren* and *partakers of the heavenly calling*.

The book is written to professing Jewish Christians. Many were immature, perhaps even a bit unstable. Some were wavering in their loyalty to Christ. They were thinking of returning to the Law of Moses and Judaism. The word 'therefore' connects to the first two chapters, the finality of the revelation given in Jesus, His true deity, and victorious humanity and the reader should therefore consider Him.

The readers are 'holy brethren'—that is set apart—set apart to worship and serve the Lord. They are brethren (either members of the nation called Israel; or members of God's family). They are partakers of the heavenly calling—that is—they are invited to participate in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom and the world that Jesus promises to establish in the future! Think about that for just a moment. Certain people are called to a heavenly life! Could that be you?

Who are they? Believers or make-believers? Do they fall short of salvation—or are they Christians who are living a life disconnected from true victory? Are these people saved by faith in Christ who are now being asked to be loyal to the Jesus who saved them?

He invites these readers to consider Jesus. He calls Him "apostle" (the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called 'apostle'). The verb form means 'to send forth' or to be sent. Jesus is the one who was sent by God the Father. The title was used to describe someone who was sent with authority—that is to make offers and explanations on behalf of the one sending. Jesus was sent by God—authorized by God to extend offers and invitations on behalf of God. Jesus made the remarkable statement; "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21).

Jesus is also called 'the High Priest' of our confession! A priest represents one party to another party; in this instance—Jesus represents us to God. In Latin the word priest is *pontifex*—the root being the bridge—and came to mean bridge builder. But even in the Jewish culture the High Priest was the one who offered sacrifices on behalf of the people in order to make them acceptable to God.

Jesus unites the offices of both prophet and priest; of both Moses and Aaron.

Jesus is not the sinner's high priest. The sinner must face Jesus as judge. Until the sinner has received Jesus as Savior—Jesus must be Judge. Jesus cannot serve as Priest and Intercessor until the sinner first stops at Calvary's Cross. Jesus did all He could do for sinners on Calvary's Cross. Jesus died for sinners. Sinners must come to Jesus as their substitute and Savior—Jesus said; "I pray for them (believers): I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given to me; for they are thine" (John 17:9).

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Jesus prays for His own; that they may be sanctified and fruitful. He is our faithful Savior and we are called to be faithful to Him in our service and in our walk. The faithfulness of Christ serve as one of our motives to be faithful to Him.

When the author uses the term ‘of our confession’ (*homologia*) it may mean the daily testimony we make regarding our faith and confidence and love of Jesus; or it may mean the doctrinal content of that confession! Whatever it means—the implication is that Jesus—His identity and His mission—and His sacrifice—and His resurrection—are the true content of our Christian faith! There is no such thing as a Christianity separate from Christ.

Consider Christ’s Faithfulness (v.2)

2who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

We are invited to consider Christ’s faithfulness; that is that Jesus faithfully discharged all duties to which He was entrusted.

What did God want Jesus to do? John 14:31 (NASB)“but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.”

The text does not disparage Moses. Moses is called faithful.

The point the writer is making is that Jesus does not fall short or come short in the category of faithfulness.

How was Moses faithful in all his house? Does the reference to house refer to the community of Jews who comprise the offspring of Jacob? Is this the community of God’s people in the Old Testament? Or does it refer to the sanctuary—the tent sanctuary in the wilderness? Is this a term that describes the Tabernacle in the Wilderness? There is an incident in Numbers 12:7 where Aaron and Miriam confront Moses before the Tabernacle—and the Lord rebukes them and afflicts them with leprosy; and reminds them that Moses had carefully, faithfully, carried out all that God had told Moses concerning His house (that is the Tabernacle).

I suspect it means Moses was faithful in “the entire sphere to which Moses represented God’s interests” (see MacDonald; p. 2165—his note on this verse).

Consider Christ The Builder And Moses The Resident (vv.3-4)

3For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

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For this One (man—Jesus); Jesus is the founder of the household; the Creator of all things; the Maker must be greater than the thing made; and the Maker of All things Has all honor. Moses serves in the House but Jesus is the Lord of the House.

Clearly Moses was a great prophet (Deut.18:15-19; Acts 3:22); and exercised the functions of a priest.

The Lord Jesus is the builder of the house—and Moses is a part of that house.

4For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.

In the Bible Israel was God's earthly household; but we are God's spiritual household.

Think of the argument the writer makes: (1) Jesus is more worthy than Moses because He is the builder of the House. (2) Jesus is greater because He is God (but He who built all things is God—Jesus built all things—Jesus is God). (3) Jesus is greater because Jesus is the Son (v.5).

The writer of Hebrews seeks to convince his reader that was Moses was in fact a servant, but also that the work of Moses—was a work of preparation—to receive the Son.

Consider Christ The Son In God's House And Moses The Servant In That House (v.5)

5And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

The things spoken by Jesus Christ.

In Moses and the Law we are in the shadows. In Christ we have the true light shining in all its strength. The writer is trying to convince the reader that returning to Judaism is returning to the shadows.

Consider Christ The Builder And Exclusive Entry (v.6)

6but 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.

Jesus is faithful over God's house as God's Son—not servant—and in this case Son means equality with God *over His own house!*

We are the dwelling place of God. We are God's house. Note; "if we hold fast"—this is the New Testament doctrine of perseverance (that is those who are truly saved—those who have been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit—with the presence of Christ in their hearts and in

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their lives are truly saved). Perseverance does not save—saved people persevere. We do not become God’s house by our faithfulness or continuance—but rather we are His house because we continue—and hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Endurance or perseverance is proof of reality; “Those who lose confidence in Christ and in His promises and return to rituals and ceremonies show that they were never born again. It is against such apostasy that the following warning is directed” (William MacDonald; p.2165).

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here the spirit and soul and body are not simply a reference to the parts of the body but rather a reference to the whole body!

Later the writer will say (Hebrews 10:36); “You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.”

Someone once said, “In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins—not through strength but through perseverance.”

Trying times are no time to quit trying. Dr. V. Raymond Edman used to say; “It is always too soon to quit.”

The expression the confidence and the rejoicing (*kauchema*) literally a boast—a kind of courageous exultation—of the hope firm to the end.

This is not the time to quit Christ.

A little thing is a little thing; but faithfulness in little things is a very great thing.

The Hebrew Christians were in danger—because they were hated, despised; their fellow Jews saw them as refuse and not Jews. They were tempted to travel on the path of compromise and embracing The Law and rituals of Judaism to make their testimony more appealing or to save them from criticism or persecution! But in so doing they would lose their confidence in Christ alone; trust in Christ as their only hope and test their assurance as believers in Christ by grace through faith alone. Judaism served as a means to retard their growth, limit their maturity, slip back into legalism and remain in spiritual infancy (see M.R. DeHaan; Studies in Hebrews p.53).

Peter warned the Jewish believers (1 Peter 4:12-13); “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; (13) but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”

M.R. DeHaan; “Look ahead to the glory and up to Jesus, and you will not go down in defeat” (p. 53). DeHaan goes on and says; “Christ’s faithfulness in saving us cost Him His life, and our

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faithfulness to Him also means paying the price. Remember, therefore, our salvation depends on His faithfulness, but our rewards are dependent upon our faithfulness in holding fast our confidence, and rejoicing in hope firm to the end” (p.53).

Conclusion

Where is the place God’s glory dwells? In the Old Testament Tabernacle? In Solomon’s Temple? In the New Testament Temple?

We are God’s dwelling place! The New Testament believer who has received Jesus has the indwelling presence of God (see John 14:7; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

Tell me something Christian; have you lost your joy or confidence or hope in Christ?

Have the tests and temptations and failures caused you to doubt your own salvation or commitment to Christ? Do you ever wonder if your salvation is real? Are you discouraged or disappointed because of the small gains or little progress made in your walk with Christ? Do you ever think the price of faithfulness to Jesus too high to pay?

Both Moses and Jesus were faithful to God. Moses was a servant. Jesus a Son. Moses served in the house of God; Jesus is Lord of that house. In Moses we remain in the shadows. In Christ we come into the light.

Perhaps now is good time to look back to Calvary and consider the cost to redeem you. Perhaps now is a good time to look up and see this same Jesus interceding for you. Assuring you that Christ’s forgiveness is greater than your failure; and there is all sufficient grace for every trial, every test, every temptation.

Perhaps now is a good time to look ahead and see this same Jesus, waiting for you; waiting to give you a crown; waiting to reward His servants for a life lived in faith and obedience, purity and power.

Perhaps now is a good time—to stop looking incessantly at your self—your problems—your pride—other people—circumstances and consider Jesus; “consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:3).

V. Raymond Edman; “Faith makes the up look good, the outlook bright, the in look favorable, and the future glorious.”

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