**Bethel Christian Fellowship**

**Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Hebrews (8): The Book Of Better Things**

**“The Superiority Of The Son To Moses”**

**Hebrews 3:1-6**

**February 25, 2024**

The book of Hebrews is all about how *Jesus is better*. In chapters one and two, we’ve seen how He’s better than the Old Testament prophets and all the angelic beings. Later in the book we’ll see that His priesthood is better than Aaron’s, and that His sacrifice and the New Covenant He’s established are better than all the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

But in the verses before us today, our author’s aim is to demonstrate that Jesus is *better* than Moses (3:1-6). Next to Abraham, Moses was undoubtedly the man most revered by the Jewish people. After all, he was Israel’s national hero, the one whom God had chosen to deliver His people from the bondage of Egypt. The entire law of Judaism also was revealed through him. To go back to the Law meant to go back to Moses, which some of the Hebrews were tempted to do. It was important, therefore, for the author to demonstrate why Jesus is greater than Moses.

Perhaps the one Old Testament passage that most clearly reveals the Lord’s high regard for Moses is Numbers 12:6-8. There we read of the Lord’s rebuke of Aaron and Miriam when they sought to speak against Moses: “*and He* (God) *said, ‘Listen to my words: when a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*’”

The “house” in which Moses served so faithfully was not the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle.) It refers to the “household” or family of God at the time of the Exodus. It is the same word that’s used six times in Hebrews 3:1-6. Moses ministered to Israel, God’s house under the Old Covenant. Today, Christ ministers to the church, God’s house under the New Covenant. With that thought in mind, we are ready to look at our author’s argument in these opening verses.

**A. The Exhortation to Consider Jesus as Superior to Moses (3:1):** “*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.*” As we know, the little word “therefore” is there for a reason. It’s the connecting link to the preceding verses, which ends with a description of Jesus as “*a merciful and faithful high priest*,” who made “*a propitiation for the sins of the people*,” and who is “*able to help those who are being tempted*” (2:17-18). “***Therefore*** *. . . fix your thoughts on Jesus*.”

To “*fix our thoughts*” on Jesus means to stay focused on Him. It means to *think* and *meditate* and *concentrate* on who Jesus is and what He has done. It means to fasten our attention upon Him, which is *very hard to do* in the world in which we live. Just think of all the opportunities and devices at our fingertips that distract us and take our minds off of Christ and His Word (smart phones, computers, TVs, Facebook, TikTok, email, texting, twitter, Instagram, and videos, etc.)

But “*fixing our thoughts*” on Him is something we *must* do, for Jesus is “*the apostle and high priest of our confession*.” By serving us in both capacities, He provides the two most important things we need. First, we need *to hear* from God, which is why Jesus came into this world. The word “apostle” means “one who is sent,” and Jesus is the one sent by the Father to make Him known to us. We saw this most clearly in Hebrews 1:1.

However, after hearing from God, we also need a way *to get* to God, which means we need to be reconciled to Him. This is what Jesus has done for us as our High Priest; He has made a “*propitiation for the sins of the people*.” As has been said before, “We need a word *from* God and a way *to* God.” Jesus provides both as “*the apostle and High Priest.*”

It’s also important to note the way in which the author addresses his readers – “*holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling*.” As “holy brothers,” Christians are set apart *by* God *for* God Himself. We are members of “His family,” distinct from all the other families in the world. We also have a “heavenly calling,” which is a calling “*from heaven . . . and to heaven*” (Gerald Hawthorne). It was *from* heaven that God set His love upon us, and chose us, and sent Christ to redeem us. Then He called us, and saved us, and established a relationship with us, one which will eventually lead us *to* heaven.

More than anything else, this heavenly calling is designed to shape our personal identity. Knowing that we are destined to live eternally in heaven’s glory is what determines our values, priorities, and commitments as we pass through this world.

**B. The comparison of Jesus and Moses (vv. 2-6a).** There are three points of comparison in these verses, and each one establishes the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Each one also alludes to Numbers 12:7, where “*the house of God*” is a reference to the “household of faith,” or the believing people of God.

1. Both Moses and Jesus were faithful to God (v. 2). “*He* (Jesus) *was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house*.” Both were sent to lead God’s people, and both were faithful in fulfilling their God-given tasks. Moses led the people of God from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land; Jesus led the people of God from the bondage of Satan (2:14-15) to the promised Sabbath-rest (Cf. 4:3, 9). But Moses was still a sinner who occasionally failed and disobeyed. Jesus, on the other hand, was *perfectly* faithful, in that He never sinned (Cf. 4:15).

2. Christ is the builder of the house, but Moses was a part of the house (vv. 3-4). “*Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything*.” Although Moses was the key figure in the establishment of Israel as God’s house, he was only a member of that house (the household of faith). He was only one among all the people of God. But Jesus is the builder (or the creator) of all such people. One might even say that Jesus is worthy of greater honor than Moses because Jesus created Moses. Further, verse 3 says that *Jesus* built the house; but verse 4 says that *God* built the house and everything else. The point is that Jesus is God!

3. Christ is the Son over the house, but Moses was a servant in the house (vv. 5-6a). “*Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house.*”The covenant under which Moses lived was temporary, so that he testified and prophesied of what would be said in the future, or “*of things that were to be spoken of later*” (ESV). **Q.** And what were those things? **A.** Jesus and all that He brought to us in the New Covenant (Cf. John 5:46). Hence Moses was a faithful servant *in* all God’s house, but Jesus is the Son *over* God’s house. Everything in the Law of Moses existed to symbolize and foreshadow and prophesy about and point to Jesus and the New Covenant.

**C. The Warning to Those who Profess to Belong to God’s House (3:6b):** “*And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast*.” This text is one of the most important texts in all of the New Testament. It tells us that perseverance in the faith is the proof of genuine, saving faith. It also serves as a fitting introduction to the extended warning that follows (3:7-4:13). It’s a warning against missing God’s promised rest because of unbelief.

It's important to note that all of these readers have professed to be Christians, and that they had withstood severe testing in the earlier days of their Christian life (10:32ff). But the testing and burdensome trials had continued, and their initial enthusiasm had begun to wane. In the words of F. F. Bruce, “. . . their Christian development had been arrested; instead of pressing ahead they were inclined to come to a full stop in their spiritual progress, if not indeed to slip back to a stage which they had left . . . . The writer, who has known them, or known about them, for a considerable time, and feels a pastoral concernfor theirwelfare, warns them against falling back, for this may result in falling away from their Christian faith altogether; he encourages them with the assurance that they have everything to lose if they fall back, but everything to gain if they press on . . .”

Merely saying that we are Christians amounts to very little. There are many today who have a “false faith,” which is a form of faith in Christ which never takes root in the heart. There may be an initial season of joy and enthusiasm and excitement for the things of the Lord, but it is followed, at some point, by drifting away from Him altogether.

Perseverance, therefore, is the proof that we are part of God’s people, the “household” of God. If we profess to have “confidence” in Christ (by claiming to have trusted in Him for salvation) and “hold on” to this hope and faith to the very end, we confirm the reality of our claim to know Christ. Temporary faith is not saving faith; persevering faith is.

We will see this truth again and again in Hebrews, such as we find in Hebrews 6:10-12; “*God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show the same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want to you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised*.”

**Q.** If we are members of the “household” of God, then how do we press on *to the very end*? **A.** We encourage one another to fix our thoughts on Jesus, and to live in light of our heavenly calling, and to never forget that Jesus is better than anything or anyone else!