

JESUS BETTER THAN MOSES (HEB 3: 1-19)

We're in a study of the Book of Hebrews. "Jesus Christ: Above All Else." This past week I sent out a flyer about this study and here is how I introduced it: "The writer of Hebrews (whoever it was) introduces Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the heir and ruler of all things. Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire world. He is the brightness of God's glory. He is the exact image of God. Jesus is greater than the angels. None of the angels was ever referred to by God as "My Son." But Jesus was! Not one angel was ever promised that they would have a kingdom that would last forever. But Jesus was! [by the way, all of that was mentioned in Hebrews Ch 1].

My introduction of Hebrews goes on to say this: "Best of all, Jesus is the One who dealt with our sin issue once for all. He did this through His sacrificial death on the cross." This was the central point made in Chapter 2, which we looked at last week. Jesus made purification for sins and He did it as the writer of Hebrews put it, by tasting death for everyone. Jesus is our perfect Savior because He became one of us, God in human flesh; and having willingly done this, He laid down His life for us, His sheep. As Jesus said in John Ch 10: "I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of my own accord." (Jn 10:17-18) And so it was that on the cross Jesus died in our place ("substitution"); He paid the ransom for our sins ("redemption"); He satisfied the holy wrath of God against our sin ("propitiation"); He reconciled us back to God ("reconciliation"); and because of what Jesus did for us we are declared righteous before a holy God ("justification"). As that great hymn proclaims, "Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

"Therefore," Chapter 3 begins, "**CONSIDER JESUS.**" And that really is in a nutshell the whole theme of Hebrews. The NLT says, "think carefully about this Jesus." The NIV says, "fix your thoughts on Jesus." The New English Translation says, "take note of Jesus." Ponder long and hard about

WHO Jesus is and WHAT He has done for you. You cannot, no, you must not ignore Him!

READ Hebrews 3:1

“Holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling” refers to **believers**, to those who have come to faith in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus here as “the apostle and high priest of our confession.” Three parts: First, Jesus is “the apostle.” An apostle, by definition, is one who is sent. In this case Jesus, the Son was sent to earth, to us, by the Father. Jesus makes this claim several times (John 3, 5 and 8). Second, Jesus is the “high priest.” The O.T. high priest was a go-between representing the Israelite people before God. This concept of Jesus as our great high priest will be discussed in detail in Hebrews Chapters 4 thru 10. Third, Jesus is the apostle and high priest “of our confession,” Jesus is the One who we believers at one time professed with our mouths as our Lord. Various denominations have their confessions, creeds or statements of faith about who they believe Jesus is. We Baptists have ours: “Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin.”

READ Hebrews 3:2-4

Here Jesus, who was faithful to God is compared to another person who was faithful to God. Who was that? What Old Testament character is most highly esteemed by the Jewish people? One person stands out above all the others. Who was it? **Moses**. He truly was a great man, a remarkable man in many ways, a faithful servant of God. God spoke directly to Moses. Moses caught a glimpse of God’s glory which made his face to shine so brightly he needed a veil to cover it. Moses was the one hand picked to lead Israel out of Egypt thru the wilderness to the Promised Land. Moses

gave the Law to the people. It was Moses who was given the detailed instructions for the Tabernacle. Moses was a pretty incredible guy! This passage is quite complimentary of Moses. I mean what greater honor could there be than to be compared in a positive way to Jesus – both Moses and Jesus were faithful to God.

However, there is a distinction made between the two in v 3. “Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses.” Jesus is better than Moses. Both were faithful over what is referred to as “God’s house.” This house is not the tabernacle or the temple or a synagogue or a church building. This house is **people – followers of the one true and living God**. Moses was a part of the house, a faithful leader of Old Testament Israel – of THAT house. But he was merely God’s servant. He was the manager of the house. Jesus is the builder of the house, the house of the new covenant, what we refer to today as the New Testament church which is made up of ALL those who place their faith in Jesus, both Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave or free, all nations and tribes of the earth. Jesus is more than just a faithful servant or leader. He built the house of God.

And just to drive home the point of who Jesus is the writer of Hebrews says basically in v 4 that this Jesus, the One who built the house is God. Look at the next two verses...

READ Hebrews 3:5-6

So, who’s greater – Moses or Jesus? Why? Because Jesus is the builder of the house, God’s Son; Moses on the other hand was just a leader of the house, a servant of God. Jesus’ greatness is proved by His comparison to the best the Old Testament and the nation of Israel had to offer.

Questions??

READ Hebrews 3:7-11

Here the writer of Hebrews is quoting from **Psalms 95**.

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says...” The writer of Hebrews says that it was the **Holy Spirit** who wrote Psalm 95. Who was the human author? Well, apparently it doesn't matter. Whoever wrote it down, whether it was David or someone else, was divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit and that is really all that matters.

Who is the subject of this Psalm 95 quotation? Who rebelled? Who hardened their hearts? Who put God to the test for 40 years in the wilderness? Who was it that went astray and failed to enter God's rest? It was the nation of Israel under the leadership of Moses. Remember the people of Israel were being oppressed and cried out to God? He raised up Moses who led them out of Egypt, He guided them thru the desert, parted the Red Sea, drowned Pharaoh's army, provided food/ water and defeated their enemies along the way. And the people did nothing but gripe and complain the whole way from Egypt to the Promised Land. Then when they finally did make it to the Promised Land they refuse to go in and take possession of it. They failed to trust God. They did not believe Him. The tragic result: that the faithless generation wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years until they all died out (except for the two God fearers who had expressed faith and trust in God, Joshua and Caleb). So that's the context of this quotation. You all know the story and the readers of this letter all knew the story. Bottom line: the Exodus generation of Israelites lacked faith in God. And they paid for it dearly. They did not enter God's rest. They did not take possession of the land God promised to give them. They missed out on the best God had to offer them. Tragic!

QUESTIONS?

READ Hebrews 3:12-14

Here the writer of Hebrews makes the application of Psalm 95 to his target audience, **his Jewish brothers**. Many were believers, but some were not. This section is actually a warning. Are you like those faithless Israelites? Are you like that unbelieving Exodus generation? Do any of you have “an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living

God"? It's a time for self-examination. Life is hard. We all have temptations and struggles. This group in Hebrews had the added burden upon them of persecution by outsiders and for believers persecution by their own people for being Christians. Life is filled with hurts, disappointments, illnesses, fears, worries whether you're a believer or not. [Question 8] V 13 says, "Exhort one another every day!" Look, my brothers and sisters in Christ, we need each other. As believers we need to **encourage and pray for each other** – every day. If we fail to do this there is the danger that we might become discouraged, maybe even slip away from the fellowship of other believers (like we have experienced recently with Covid-19). There is a real danger if we are not careful that we could harden our hearts, become cold and calloused, even resentful toward God and to His church. Be careful. Examine yourself. This is not a good place to be. What do you do if you find yourself there? Repent and come back to God.

Let me say something about the "deceitfulness of sin" mentioned in v 13. For unbelievers sin says, "You're OK, you're not so bad. You don't really need Jesus." For us Christians sin says, "Hey, you're saved. God will forgive you. It's no big deal." Sin deceives us. It lies to us. The fact is that our sin, no matter how minor we think it is, the reality is that it effects our relationships with God and with others. Sin needs to be dealt with, confessed and repented of.

V 14 answers the question, how do we know if we are truly believers or not? READ Hebrews 3:14 again. What is the mark of a true believer? We hold to our faith in Christ to the end. This harkens back to what was said earlier in v 6 "We are His house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope." Our confidence is never in ourselves but in Jesus. No matter what life sends our way, we hold on to that truth, we maintain our confidence, our faith in Jesus firm to the end, until we leave this world. Well, let's wrap this up...

READ Hebrews 3:15-19

A sobering word of warning here. The writer of Hebrews is once again reminding his audience and us of the faithless Exodus generation. Think about all that they witnessed firsthand – all the miracles and provisions they experienced from the mighty hand of God. And yet they failed to trust God and take possession of the land He wanted to give them. If they could fall away, don't think that you can't. I'm talking to a room of Christians. You won't lose your salvation. That is secure. But what you will lose out on are all the blessings that God has for you. For the people of Israel they were denied entry into the Promised Land because of their disobedience, unbelief, and lack of faith. For us 21st Century Christians we are unable to enjoy all the riches and glory in Christ Jesus for the same reason – disobedience, unbelief and a lack of faith. And so, I conclude the way I started this lesson with an admonition for all of us – live by faith, trust Him who saved you, consider Jesus!