Hebrews 3 Christ: Better than Moses

**September 7-8, 2016**

*Having argued for the supremacy of Jesus (who is shown to be superior to the prophets and angels), chapter 3 makes the case for how Christ is better than Moses, the one through whom the first covenant came. God miraculously protected Moses as a baby and provided for his burial – and in between are many miracles of God speaking to Moses face to face. He led Israel out of Egypt and to the promised land, received the 10 commandments, planned for tabernacle and ark of the covenant, and wrote the first 5 books of the OT which lay out laws that govern daily Jewish life. It is not surprising that Moses was respected by the nation of Israel. Yet the author of Hebrews tells the Jewish readers to look more at Jesus. Moses was indeed great, but Jesus is far superior – in his office, Jesus is the apostle and high priest, in person he is the son of the living God, in his work he is the builder of the house. Chapter 3 also contains another warning (with chapter 2 telling us to hear and not drift) – a challenge to accept Christ, not just intellectually but with one’s whole heart. Israel’s disastrous history of unbelief and disobedience is held up as a somber illustration of consequences of rejecting God’s invitation of mercy and grace.*

*“Apostle and High priest” – an apostle is a sent one who has the rights, power, and authority of the one who sends him. Jesus was sent to earth by the Father. More about the topic of high priesthood of Christ in chapter 4. Meanwhile the writer presents the superiority of Christ to Moses, Joshua, and to all other national heroes and the Old Testament preachers whom Jews held in high esteem. Jesus himself spoke of His superiority to Moses in the same context in which he spoke of being sent by the Father. Moses had been sent by God to deliver his people from historical Egypt and its bondage. Jesus was sent by God to deliver his people from spiritual bondage.*

*“Moses” – the Hebrew prophet who delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and who was their leader and lawgiver during their years of wandering in the wilderness. In the covenant ceremony on Mount Sinai where the 10 commandments were given, Moses founded the religious community known as Israel. As the interpreter of these covenant laws, he organized the community’s religious and civil traditions.*

**Read Hebrews 3:1-19.**

In what way is Christ better, greater, or more important, than Moses? Why did the writer of Hebrews argue this? (3:1-6)

 *(“He who built” – Moses was only part of God’s household of faith whereas Jesus was the creator of the household and therefore is greater than Moses and equal to God.”Servant…son” – the term for servant implies dignity and freedom not slavery, however even as the highest-ranking servant, Moses could never hold the position of Son, which is Christ’s alone.)*

What does it mean to “share in heavenly calling” (v.1) ? Is it difficult to fix your eyes on Jesus? What does that look like to you? What can I do today to focus on him?

 *(We have been left with the picture of Jesus, our heavenly High Priest. Since this is true, it teaches something about who we are. Understanding who we are in light of who Jesus is and what He has done is essential for a healthy Christian life. It keeps us from the depths of discouragement the Hebrew Christians faced; Because Jesus is committed to bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10), we are partners in His heavenly calling. This should bless and encourage us to press on, even through difficult times and trials.)*

What will be true of those who truly “share in Christ” (v.6, 14)? What does this mean to you?

 *(“if we hold fast” – this is not speaking of how to be saved or remain saved, rather that perseverance in faithfulness is proof of real faith.*

 *“hope” – that rests in Christ himself whose redemptive work has accomplished our salvation.)*

Who is the warning for based on the OT passage quoted in v. 7-11? What is the nature of this warning? What will be result of not heeding this warning? Why does Hebrews chapter 3 emphasize the word ‘today’?

 *(“today” – reference to the present moment while the words of God are fresh in the mind. There is a sense of urgency to immediately give heed to the voice of God, emphasized by repeating “today” from Psalm 95.*

 *“My rest” – the earthly rest which God promised to give was life in the land of Canaan, which Israel would receive as inheritance, but because of rebellion against God, an entire generation of children of Israel was prohibited from entering into that rest in the promised land. The application is to an individual’s spiritual rest in the Lord, which has its precedent in the OT. At salvation every believers enters the true rest, the realm of spiritual promise, never again laboring to achieve through personal effort a righteousness that pleases God.)*

How is sin described in v. 13? What does this mean? V. 13 also issues the command to encourage one another to identify with Christ rather than be overcome by unbelief. How can God use you today to encourage another believer?

 *(“evil heart” – all men are born with such a heart, in the case of these Hebrews that evil manifested itself in disbelief of the gospel, which moved them in the opposite way from God.*

*“encourage” – as long as distressing days were upon them and tempted to return to their previous ways, they were to encourage one another to identify completely with Christ.*

 *“hardened” – repeated rejection of the gospel concerning Jesus results in a progressive hardening of the heart and will ultimately result in outright antagonism to the gospel.*

 *“deceitfulness” – sin lies and deceives, using every trickery and strategy possible, the Hebrews deceived themselves with the reasoning that their rejection of Jesus was being faithful to the older system. Their willingness to hold on to their old system was a rejection of the living Word of the “living God” who through Christ had opened up a “new and living way”, choosing the path of unbelief always leads to death, Unbelief and sin is deceitful because when we are unbelieving towards God, we don't stop believing - we simply start believing in a deception.)*

In this chapter, ‘unbelief’ does not mean sincere doubts. It means an attitude that people choose on purpose, not to allow God to rule their lives. What was the result of that attitude for the people that Moses led? Why is that attitude so dangerous?

What works of God (v.9) in your life should prompt a deeper and more consistent daily walk of faith? Am I holding tight to the faith, or is my confidence slipping a little? (v. 14).

**Read Psalm 95:1-11**

How were the children of Israel in the wilderness a classic example of unbelief?

What is one antidote for a hardened heart (v.1-6)?

Look at Hebrews 3:6, 14 – how is being steadfast in our faith related to not having a hardened heart?

**Back to Hebrews, Reflection**

This Hebrews passage urges us to “consider Christ Jesus.” What would this look like in your everyday life? How can you do that? What are some evidences that a person is in fact keeping their eyes on the Savior?

 *(“Calling” – summons to salvation in Christ.*

 *“Consider Christ” – the writer asks for the readers’ complete attention and diligent observation of the superiority of Jesus.*

 *”Confession” – Christ is the center of our confession of faith in the gospel, in creed and public testimony, sense of urgency, surely the readers would not give up Christ whom they had just professed and reject what he had done for them, if they could understand the superiority of his work Jesus is the One who supremely represents us before the Father, and who represents the Father to us. God cares for us so much that He put the ultimate mediator, the ultimate High Priest, between Himself and sinful man. The message is plain: consider this. Consider that God loves you this much, and that if such a great High Priest has been given to us, we must honor and submit to this High Priest, who is Christ Jesus. Consider Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession: Jesus is the ambassador and the mediator of our confession. Christianity is a confession made with both the mouth (Matthew 10:32, Romans 10:9) and with the life.)*