

Jesus Deserves the Better Honor

If Moses, who faithfully represented God, deserved honor as the builder of God's house, Jesus deserves greater honor as the owner of the house. To honor Christ, we must hold fast to our confession of faith and take heed to the voice of Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1-15

INTRO

We've only made it through two chapters, and have been overwhelmed by the author's description of the greatness of Jesus.

- **[slide]** He has the better voice than the prophets, the greater authority than the angels (as the uncreated Son of God), and he is the better man (in doing as a man what we could never accomplish).
- The last time we discovered that Jesus won the better victory by rendering the devil ineffective against the believer, delivering people from the bondage of fear and death, and aiding us in our struggle against temptations here in this life.
- But folks, we are just getting started! we have 11 more chapters to go!
- The title of today's message is, "Jesus Deserves the better honor."
- Yes, this chapter is about how Jesus is better than Moses, but the drive of the chapter is not simply that Jesus is better than Moses, but what Jesus deserves from us because He is better than Moses.

Before we get to that comparison, let's not miss the first verse that sets the tone for chapter 3:

BIBLE VERSE

Hebrews 3:1-15 (NKJV) 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also [was faithful] in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things [is] God. 5 And Moses indeed [was] faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken [afterward,] 6 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. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in [their] heart, And they have not known My ways.’ 11 So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 3:1 NKJV – 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

APPLICATION

Verse 1 gives us the clearest indication in the book of WHO the author is writing to.

Holy brethren – This indicates a specific Christian audience. The unsaved gentile or the unsaved Jew would not be given the name, **“The holy brethren”**. It seems clear that he is referring to those who have been **made holy** by the blood of Jesus, and have been **united into one family** by the heavenly calling of God.

Partakers of the heavenly calling – The heavenly calling of the Father of salvation.

- The most important calling a person can recognize is not the calling of their temporary life, but the calling to eternal life.
- ***Partakers*** – not observers, not bystanders, but partakers. We share in what Christ has accomplished and reaped the benefits of His sacrifice and salvation.

As heirs of such an amazing call, what should we do when our hearts are tempted to move away from Christ?

We should, “**...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,**”

QUOTE

Our confession is, “*A binding expression of obligation and commitment. The response of faith to the action of God.*”

William Lane, Commentary on Hebrews

APPLICATION

- **Apostle** – that is he is the ambassador from heaven that first delivered to us the salvation of God.
- **The High Priest of our confession** – Our confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is built on our faith; our confession is the cornerstone on which we build our lives upon.
 - Up to the point of Christ, the sacrificial system was managed by imperfect priests who had to both mediate for the people and for their own sin. But Jesus mediates the better covenant in that as a high priest, He can represent us before God the Father on His own merit, with His own righteousness.
 - What good is a confession without a solid foundation? Our confession can be trusted because of the one who brought it to us as an ambassador from heaven and who secured it through His own sacrifice and who solidifies it through his continued intercession and intermediation as High Priest forever.

CONTEXT

We are to consider Christ!

- This is a theme in Hebrews that we find again in chapter 12, where the author uses the same sentence structure, telling us to, **“Consider Jesus.”**

APPLICATION

It’s amazing to me how fixing our eyes on Jesus centers us back to what really matters.

- *The political world is going crazy and I don’t know what to do to fix it! Consider Jesus.*
- *My financial picture is uncertain and I don’t know what tomorrow holds! Consider Jesus.*
- *We seem to be losing more and more freedoms around every turn! Consider Jesus.*
- *Things around me are falling apart! Consider Jesus.*

Josh, Are you telling me that most of the woes, difficulties, anxieties, and questions I face in life can **begin to resolve** by simply considering Jesus Christ? Yes! For the Hebrew Christians, the temptation to fall back to the religious system of Judaism could easily be combated if they would take a moment to really consider Jesus.

I love the hymn, **“The Heavenly Vision.”** many of you know the words, **“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”**

Those words, written in 1922, were inspired by a short devotional written by one of the first missionaries into Islamic Algeria, Lilius Trotter. This work, entitled, **“Focused”**, is powerful and speaks of the necessity to turn our eyes solely upon Jesus. I wish I had time to read you the entire thing, but here is a small section:

QUOTE

For if the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon our hearts, there is an ocean of grace and love and power lying all around us, an ocean to which all earthly light is but a drop, and it is ready to transfigure us, as the sunshine transfigured the dandelion, and on the same condition—that we stand full face to God. Gathered up, focused lives, intent on one aim—Christ—these are the lives on

which God can concentrate blessedness. It is “all for all” by a law as unvarying as any law that governs the material universe... And Satan knows well the power of concentration; if a soul is likely to get under the sway of the inspiration, “this one thing I do,” he will turn all his energies to bring in side-interests that will shatter the gathering intensity.

Focussed , I. Liliias Trotter

APPLICATION

So powerful!

The author wants us to consider Jesus lest other things steal from us the blessedness of seeing Him clearly. So in considering Jesus, I’ve divided the passage into three points to help us navigate.

1

Honor the Faithfulness of Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 3:2 NKJV – 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

MOSES

Except for one incident, Moses faithfully led Israel for 40 years...

Moses ticked all the necessary boxes to be the ultimate Hebrew hero, the one who deserves the honor of the people.

He was a Religious hero:

- Moses spoke to God face to face.

- By the hand of Moses, God brought forth the divine law.
- Under Moses' leadership, the tabernacle was established which brought for the nearness of God's presence to His people.
- He wielded miraculous power, and through him supernatural miracles took place.

He was a political hero:

- He humbled a tyrannical Pharaoh and mighty Egypt.
- Liberated His people from 430 years of slavery and led them out of bondage.
- Sculpted a band of former slaves into a mighty nation.
- He brought law and order, and a strong, just structure of leadership.

He was a military hero:

- Converted servants into a fighting army.
- His hands raised high caused the sun to stand still for a great military victory.

In fact, Moses was so revered that when he died the angel Michael buried his body in a hidden grave so the Jews wouldn't be tempted to worship his bones.

APPLICATION

Isn't it easy to almost idolize hero's of the past, giving them perhaps more honor than they are due?

Presidents with the strength and character of Washington, the tenacity of Lincoln, the and the wisdom of Reagan. Preachers with the fire of Edwards, the insight of Spurgeon and the boldness of Billy Graham.

God has used so many men in so many ways to bring about so much good. For the Jews it was Moses. And the church, the completed Jews, were tempted to look back and go back to placing Moses at the top of their totem pole as it were.

APPLICATION

Here, *Jesus is introduced in comparison to Moses, the Hebrew He-Man.*

- Moses was the representative of God to the ancient world. He was the carrier of the law of God that governed Israel and made God's moral character known.
- Moses was faithful to represent God in all his house... ***almost***.
- There was one incident found in Number 20, where Moses is commanded by God to speak to a rock so that it might bring forth water for His thirsty people. Instead, out of anger, Moses strikes the rock with his staff, unknowingly causing a serious misrepresentation of God.
- Later, Paul writes that the rock represented Jesus. That Jesus was struck once on the cross, but now will provide living water to all who speak His name.
- Oops.
- But hey, 1 mistake in 40 years is a pretty good track record!

JOKE

In early 2000, Ariel Sharon and George Bush were scheduled for a meeting. Sharon was late, and Bush was upset. Sharon told him, "Mr. President, I'm sorry, but I was talking to someone more important than you." Bush was thinking, "How dare him! Who could be more important than the President of the United States?" Sharon told him, "I was talking to Moses."

Bush was impressed. He said, "Can I talk to Moses?"

Sharon pulled out his cell phone and whispered a conversation... Finally, he turns to George W. and informs him, "Mr. President, I'm sorry, but Moses said he doesn't want to talk to you... The last time he talked to a Bush it cost him forty years in the wilderness."

CONTEXT

So Moses, as faithful as he was, couldn't cut it. Not only could Moses not meet all the requirements of the perfect leader, his brother Aaron and the line of priests that came from him were imperfect in their roles as priest and mediator. When we get to the High Priest Eli, we see another priest who lacked in faithfulness to God. A prophet came to Eli, rebuking him for his unfaithfulness to God, then makes this prophecy:

BIBLE VERSE

1Sa 2:35 NKJV – 35 ‘Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.

JESUS

It’s easy to see why the Hebrews were so enamored with Moses, and would even be tempted to fall back to Moses from following Jesus. So the author makes a case that Jesus was more faithful than even Moses. He was the man who represented the New Covenant of God, and represented it perfectly, without sin.

- Never once did Jesus misrepresent the heart, truth, or character of God. If you saw Jesus, you saw the Father! His faithfulness to represent God perfectly is what gives him greater honor than Moses.

Jesus:

- Jesus didn’t simply speak face to face with God, He Was the face of God
- Jesus didn’t simply perform miracles, He was the source of miraculous power
- He didn’t merely lead Israel into a physical promised land, He defeated death and the devil and led humanity out of the slavery of sin and death and into life.
- God delivered His grace through Jesus and forever it will be called, “The grace of Jesus Christ.” (*The law came through Moses, but grace and truth came in Jesus – John 1:17*)
- Jesus sculpted a band of former slaves to sin into a mighty spiritual army.
- When Jesus died, they tried to bury His body, but it rose from the grave three days later, worthy now to be worshipped by all!

Jesus was faithful, and He IS faithful.

APPLICATION

What a blessed reality! Jesus’ faithfulness cannot fail! When we are tempted to take matters into our own hands, we must consider the faithfulness of Jesus. When we are questioning God’s purpose, we need to remember the faithfulness of Jesus. When we are wavering in our zeal, resolve or fervency to God, we must remember the faithfulness of Jesus and make him our example.

QUOTE

Because Jesus is faithful, He is worthy of our continued faith.

Josh, Quote

2

Honor the Position of Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 3:3-6 NKJV – 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant (*Numbers 12:7*), for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 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.

CONTEXT

Moses was a builder hired by God to establish and build the nation (house) of Israel. That makes Moses pretty great. But as great as he was, he certainly wasn't greater than the architect and designer of the house. Moses was a sub-contractor, a hired-hand. So who was the owner? The author tells us that the true builder is God.

If the hired hand was honored, how much more should the one who hired him? The one who created him? ***The glory of the creator always outweighs the glory of the created.*** The glory of the stars and the galaxies pales in comparison to the glory of the one who created all things, God.

In the same way, Moses received glory and honor for his role in building the house of Israel, but the creator of the house will receive greater glory.

- We are told that Moses was a servant in God's house, but Jesus is the Son, the rightful owner, and designer of the house.

5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant (Numbers 12:7 – God gives him this honor), for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 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.

[Num 12:7 NKJV] 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house.

APPLICATION

So Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, but Jesus was more than a faithful servant. He is the owner of the house. And remember what Jesus said regarding the church?

- **Upon this rock, I will BUILD my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.**
- This is why we don't worship Paul, or Peter, or any pastor or leader... all those are just servants in the house... hired hands. Jesus is the heir. Jesus is the owner and king. He is the one we worship!

BIBLE VERSE

1Co 3:9-11 NKJV – 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

THE HOUSE OF JESUS

How amazing it is that Jesus wants to take up residence in us.

- *Jesus is building us up into His spiritual house! He alone is the foundation of our faith!*
- *Our worship and fellowship reveal the very presence of God.*
- *But we can't ignore the fact that there is a prerequisite to remaining part of Jesus' house.*

6 ...whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Jesus is our only hope for peace with God and eternal life, but what happens when someone abandons that hope? What happens when they lose confidence in Christ and Christ alone? What happens when someone goes from seeing Jesus as their greatest blessing to seeing Jesus as their greatest burden? Who goes from trusting in the work of Jesus to trusting in religion, or trusting in the world?

- What happens is a hardening of the heart towards the voice of God until rebellion sets in.

Next, The author illustrates his point through the example of the OT wilderness wanderers; those who initially came out of Egypt. The ancient Israelis began well but ended poorly because ***they didn't continue in their faith.***

3

Honor the Voice of Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 3:7-11 NKJV – 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

CONTEXT

The Holy Spirit says – the human author recognizes the divine authorship of the scriptures. He quotes Psalm 95, but indicates that it was not merely the Psalmist speaking to Israel, but the Holy Spirit speaking to all people. And what's the message? **When God speaks, don't ignore Him.**

Next, the author quotes from the Psalms. Here he uses Psalm 95, a Psalm that relates to the those who were standing at doors, looking over into the promised land determining whether or not to enter.

- Numbers 13-14 record for us these events. Israel was camped at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran, on the verge of entering Canaan, the promised land.
- Entrance into the land was the goal of the Exodus and was necessary for the fulfillment of God's promise to His people.
- Those 12 spies who had been sent into Canaan to explore the land brought back a bad report (***all but two, Joshua and Caleb***)

- When faced with the obstacles, the Israelites refused to enter. ***They rejected the promise of God through unbelief.***

BIBLE VERSE

7 “Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ 11 So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ “

CONTEXT 2

There were many incidents during the wilderness wanderings that reflect the truth of this scripture.

- Almost from the get-go, the children of Israel displayed that they were ***complainers and rebels.***
- They doubted God’s promises of deliverance, despised God’s provision, and derided God’s leaders. When God did protect and provide, it was never good enough for them.
 - They complained about being hungry then complained about the food God provided.
 - They complained about the difficulties of the wilderness while forgetting that the challenges of the wilderness were nothing compared to the plight of their former enslavement in Egypt.
 - They created idols, they rebelled against Moses, they disregarded God’s law... Eventually, their own lusts and desires created within them a hardness of heart to the voice of God. When God finally said, ***“Go and don’t be afraid of the giants.”*** They said, ***“Yeah, no. We will do this our way, God.”***
 - And that all culminated in Kadesh, where God, after 40 years, declared his final judgment on that generation of people. The entire incident is found in Numbers 14. I highly encourage you to read the entire chapter.

BIBLE VERSE

Num 14:22-23, 26-32 NKJV – 22 “because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 “they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

APPLICATION

This warning is troubling to the one who is on the fence about Jesus! The author is clear that his audience may be in the same predicament as the unbelieving Israelites from the wilderness. He is pleading with them:

- *Be those who trust God, not those who try and test Him.*
- *Be those who listen and respond with ears of faith and hearts of obedience, not those who resist with a hardness of heart.*
- *Be those who remain steadfast and faithful, not those who are continually going astray and pursuing idolatry and worldly pleasure in their hearts.*

Next, he drives the application home to his audience.

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 3:12-15 NKJV – 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

APPLICATION

The heart of unbelief is not far from any of us. In order to avoid the slow process of “heart hardening”, there are several things we must do:

1.) Be aware of the condition of your heart – Every day, every weekend, you and I hear the voice of God through His Word. His Spirit is speaking to us all the promises of God to us in Christ Jesus. What does it do to the heart of God when we look at Jesus and all that we have been given and:

- Start complaining about how hard it is to follow Jesus and how much better life was before we decided to follow Him?
- Chase idols to give us temporary fulfillment because we aren't satisfied in Christ?
- Decide that our way is better than God's
- Resist God's promises because our fears seem bigger and stronger than God's ability?

When we stop trusting God and wain from following Christ, there is an issue going on in our hearts.

[Mat 6:21 NKJV] 21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Apparently, none of us is past the potential of a slowly hardening heart that ultimately becomes blind to its need for Christ.
- How do we beware? We ask ourselves, “Am I tending toward unbelief? If I am, I must recognize that faithlessness itself is wickedness at work. Why? Because unbelief ultimately leads to departure.

2.) Be daily engaged –

First, notice the emphasis on the word TODAY:

- If you hear His voice TODAY.
- Exhort one another TODAY.

There is no promise that the opportunity you have to avoid destruction today will still be available tomorrow.

- if you hear His voice: Through the Word, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the exhortation of another believer...

Think of it this way: You might be the answer to someone's slow journey into faithlessness. While it is called “today”, for there is no promise of tomorrow. We must be passionate about engaging one another and exhorting one another to love and good works every day. We live in a culture where we value our privacy, but the biblical truth is that we need to be motivated out of our unbelief and apathy.

Apparently, true Christian fellowship is the remedy to waning faith and increasing faithlessness.

- **What's at stake?** That hearts will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
- **EXAMPLE:** Vacuuming a carpet. You can't see all the dirt until you have to change out the vacuum bag.
 - Sin is deceitful. Sin never tells you the endgame while it's taking advantage of you.
 - The guy glancing occasionally at pornography never said, ***"One day I'm going to leave my wife for another woman and get out of the church and question the existence of God."*** But if sin has its wish, it will lie to him all the way there.
 - The gal who had the one extra drink over their limit during girl's night out never thought, ***"One day I'll be an alcoholic who is wallowing in depression and doubting if God is even real anymore."*** But if sin can have its way, it will lie to her all the way there.
 - That guy who cheated the business deal just a little to gain the extra advantage never said to himself, ***"One day I'm going to be a greedy, rotten scoundrel whose God is wealth and pleasure and drift from my faith in Christ."*** But sin, if not confronted, will deceive him all the way there.

3.) Be steadfast in your faith– For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. The word "if" is a strong conditional word! It indicates a condition. It is not the person who once had faith, but the one who continues and perseveres in their faith that inherits the promise and the eternal rest of God. NOTE: It is not the questioning of faith or the struggle to maintain faith that puts one in danger. Those are natural parts of Christianity. It is the abandonment of our faith and hope in Christ and Christ alone that drives the nail in the coffin.

ILLUSTRATION

Listen to how author Kent Hughes describes it, "The problem today is that so many people when asked about faith point to their 'exodus' – when they began with Christ. They can wax eloquent about their experiences. How dare anyone question that! They "went forward" – left Egypt – they were baptized and identified with God's people. But troubles came, and they turned away. Some people's "Exodus" is a convenient memory. But to trust God now? That is a problem, for their faith is dead."

In short, a faith that was – isn't necessarily a faith that is. How current is your faith? The people of Israel might've been delivered from Egypt, but they never made it out of the wilderness into the promised land. Christian, whatever you do, don't give up on Jesus!

QUOTE

Our exit from Egypt is only the beginning of our faith journey. We must continue strong until we enter the ultimate promised land.

Josh,

BIBLE VERSE

15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

ILLUSTRATION

A few years back I took my kids on a hike to the South Yuba River. We had a great time. We spent time skipping rocks. I found an interesting rock that reminded me of this verse. **It was a heart of stone.**

According to Ezekiel 36, in Christ God has taken our heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh... a soft heart that is sensitive to His Spirit and His law, and desires to obey his voice.

But apparently, unbelief and a lack of faith can reverse the softness of our hearts and create a calloused heart that is resistant to the Lord.

QUOTE

A heart that hears God but doesn't heed God will ultimately harden toward God.

Josh, Quote

APPLICATION

Apparently hearing and heeding are not one in the same.

Like the ancient Israelites, we too are a people in transition; on a journey between redemption and eternal rest. Be it through death or the return of Christ, we all are on the cusp of entering into His promise. The greatest sin threatening us? Unbelief. To hear Jesus then turn your back on Him or turn to someone or something else is the greatest threat to your race.

- What is Jesus speaking to you today? The worst thing you can do is dismiss it or resist it. You see, the children of Israel who didn't enter into the promised land still believed IN God, they just didn't believe God. That was their greatest sin. Their belief wasn't mixed with genuine faith.
- We need to make sure that we aren't simply *believing in Jesus*, we need to *believe Jesus* to the point of obedience surrender from this point until we see Him face to face.

BIBLE VERSE

[Rev 3:20 NKJV] 20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

BIBLE VERSE

[Luk 13:24-27 NKJV] 24 “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 “When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ 26 “then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ 27 “But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’

APPLICATION

The point here is that Jesus deserves the greatest honor, more than our greatest political hero, spiritual hero, or otherwise. And to honor Christ means to heed His voice when He says, “believe in Me, trust in me, and follow me!”

- When do you listen and obey? NOW. Today is the day. Answer while the Lord knocks on the door of your heart, not when you're standing outside, desperately knocking on the door that has been shut.