

Chapter 3:1 '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 (God's) 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.'

Remember, the Holy Spirit is writing to the Hebrews to convince them of the all surpassing excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest, that He is higher and greater than anyone, anything and everything. In chapter 1 he showed that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets. Then, in chapter 2 he showed Christ's superiority over angels and now he will show His superiority over *even* Moses.

To these Hebrews, Moses was the highest human who had ever lived. He was the one with whom God spoke face to face. Moses saw the glory of God... his own face had reflected the glory of God when he came down from Mt. Sinai after receiving the Law, written on stone tablets with God's Own hand. He was the one who led Israel out from the slavery of Egypt. He was the one to whom God gave the Law and then the one who gave the Law to Israel. Moses wrote the first 5 books of the Bible. To the Hebrews, all of the Law and all of the rituals of Judaism rested in Moses; through Moses came the plans for the Tabernacle and all the furnishings within including the Ark of the Covenant where God Himself resided within the Temple. Moses was the mediator between God and the people. To the Jews, Moses *was* the Law. To the Hebrews, no human was higher than Moses... not even Abraham. Moses was the greatest leader, the greatest prophet, the greatest miracle worker... but now, the writer will show them that the Lord Jesus Christ is higher *even* than Moses.

And so, now He begins to show the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ over *even* Moses: he says, 'consider Jesus.' That is the theme of the entire Book of Hebrews and that is the theme of the entire Word of God. God Almighty reveals Himself in Jesus Christ and says, 'consider Jesus.'

Chapter 3: 'Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...' Remember, even though the writer addresses them as 'holy brethren' and 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' he is writing to believers as well as unbelievers in this congregation. There are three types of Hebrews to whom he is writing... #1. Hebrews who have believed and placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation and who are experiencing persecution from Jews and Gentiles alike; they are feeling weak and discouraged; they are wrestling with returning to the rituals of Judaism. group #2. Hebrews who've become intellectually convinced of the truth of the Gospel but have resisted taking that final step of faith to truly believe and trust in Christ for Salvation... and #3, Hebrews who are not convinced at all, but still keep coming to 'Church.' All of them are 'brethren' and 'partakers of the heavenly calling' in that they are part of Israel, chosen and called by God in that sense, but that is not enough... they must consciously believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So, he says, '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.'

His first word in this chapter is 'Therefore.' What does therefore indicate? He is saying, 'In light of all that I've said before this, consider Jesus.' What has He already said? (I capitalize 'He' when referring to the writer of Hebrews because really, the author is God Himself, the Holy Spirit.)

He is saying, 'Therefore, since I've already shown you in the first two chapters that Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels for a short time, that He is the Captain of our salvation, that He is the Sanctifier, that He calls us brothers, that He came to destroy Satan and death... since I've shown you all that... therefore, **consider Jesus** Who was faithful to God, as was Moses.

Jesus Christ was faithful unto God in submission and obedience. Here, His faithfulness is compared to that of Moses. After the Israelites had been enslaved for hundreds of years, the Egyptians were afraid that the population of Israelites would become so great as to would pose a threat to the Egyptians. Pharaoh commanded that all male baby Israelites be killed. When Moses was born, his mother placed him in a basket and into the weeds along the bank of the Nile as his sister kept watch to see what would happen. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter who adopted and raised him as her own son. He grew up as a prince in Egypt, as one of the wealthiest, most privileged people on Earth. In Exodus, we read that Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew but it says he knew the Hebrew was his *kinsman*. He killed the Egyptian and hid the body. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and tried to break it up. One of them said, 'Are you going to kill me too?' So Moses knew that he had been seen and he ran away to Midian. He chose to leave his privileged life in Egypt. However, we learn more of the story when we get to Hebrews 11:24. It says, 'By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ ***esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*** That's an odd statement.

When Moses became an adult, he refused to take advantage of what was offered him as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Every sinful pleasure that the world could offer and all the treasure of the World's richest kingdom... Moses rejected it all... he probably sensed he was rejecting Egypt when he chose to kill the Egyptian who was beating the Hebrew... and here's something else... he didn't even know God... think about it. Moses didn't grow up learning about Jehovah... He grew up being taught to worship the demon gods of Egypt: Horus, Ra, Thoth, Osiris, Isis, Seth. Perhaps Hebrew slaves had told Moses about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... maybe he had asked them what they believed... but remember also... the Hebrews themselves knew next to nothing about God. This was before the Exodus... before the Law... before the priesthood, before Passover or sacrifices or any of it... all they knew was the little that their fathers and grandfathers remembered of what they'd been told of what Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had learned. Perhaps God opened Moses' understanding enough to know that he was rejecting the futility of life in Egypt and drawing toward the reality of life with God Almighty. Moses grew up as Egyptian royalty but God directed every step of his life and revealed Himself to Moses at exactly His chosen moment... at the burning bush in the Midian desert... but perhaps even before that...

Look at that last line again... ***he esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt...*** why... ***because he looked forward to the reward.*** How did he know anything about Christ or 'the reward?' This is 1500 years before Jesus Christ was even born.

What does that mean... the reproach of Christ... to 'reproach' means to 'address (someone) in such a way as to express disapproval or disappointment.' Did God, the Lord Jesus Christ, appear to Moses even before He did so in the burning bush? Here's what it sounds like... the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Moses and reproached him... saying something like, 'Moses, Moses... you think you are rich and your life has meaning, but down deep, you recognize that your life is empty and meaningless. Stop what you are doing... turn from this pampered life of futility. I have plans for you. If you follow Me, I will reward you with eternal riches in the future. But if you do, you'll suffer affliction with My people. The Hebrews are My people and I am their God... I will be your God.' Moses believed God... he looked forward to that eternal reward and he trusted God. He considered the reproach of Christ to be more valuable than the riches of Egypt.

Prov. 27 says, 'Open rebuke *is* better than love carefully concealed. ⁶ Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' Did Moses receive a personal rebuke from the Lord Jesus Christ and recognize its true value? I think he did.

We don't have Scriptural proof for all of that, but we do have Scriptural proof of some of it... look again: it says, 'By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ***esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.***'

Not all of this is clearly spelled out in Scripture, but if some of what I've assumed here is not true, then that verse doesn't really 'make any sense, does it, where it says, '***...esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.***' How often have we just glossed over that verse?

It says that Moses was motivated by the reward that God promised. God offers us eternal reward which He intended for our motivation. Paul wrote, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Cor 2:9 He expects us to be motivated by a desire for eternal reward. The same is true here in Hebrews. What did we just read... 'partakers of the heavenly calling...' 'you are called to a heavenly reward.' 'Don't miss eternal life.' That's also one of the reasons why the Bible is so clear about the reality of the eternal punishment of Hell for all those who reject God's gift of salvation. He wants us to clearly understand the alternative to the eternal reward He offers.

Moses rejected the riches of Egypt and chose to suffer with the people of God.

That is how faithful Moses was, how truly faithful... the Lord Jesus Christ chose to leave the riches of Heaven and suffer for the people of God...

Back to chapter 3, it says that the Lord Jesus Christ is even more faithful than Moses: 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.

They considered Moses as the leader over the 'House of Israel,' but the writer is saying, 'God is the One Who created and built the 'House of Israel.'

⁴For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God. ⁵And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 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.

He is saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to Moses, He is worthy of more glory than Moses in three areas... in His **office**, in His **work** and in His **person**. 1. In His office... Moses was an apostle and prophet, **sent by** God, but Jesus Christ is our Apostle and High Priest, **sent from** God. 2. In His work: Moses led the House of Israel but Jesus Christ **built** the House of Israel. Moses offered sacrifices for sin but Jesus Christ **is** the Sacrifice for sin. 3. In his person, Moses was faithful as a servant of God, but Jesus Christ was faithful as the **Son** of God.

Moses was sent **by** God to deliver His chosen people, Israel from bondage in physical, historical Egypt under Pharaoh. Jesus Christ was sent **from** God to deliver His people, chosen from every nation, tongue and tribe, out of the eternal bondage of spiritual Egypt, the World, under the god of this World, Satan.

Since this New Covenant is better than the Old covenant, it must, of necessity, have a better Mediator. Moses was the mediator of the Old and inferior Covenant... the Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant were inferior in that they had to be offered over and over again, without end, by a High Priest who was himself a sinner and needed to have sacrifice offered for his own sin. The Sacrifice of the New Covenant was superior in that it was a perfect Sacrifice, a sinless, perfect Lamb of God, offered once for all by a perfect, sinless High Priest Who presented Himself as the perfect offering for sin, the only Sacrifice acceptable to God... once for all, for all time, never needing to be repeated again.

Jesus Christ is sufficient... nothing needs to be added to His sacrifice. None of the rituals or symbols of the Levitical system are needed any longer.

'Therefore, He says, **'consider Jesus.'**

The main targets of this letter are Hebrew believers who, because of persecution or doubt, are tempted to hold on to, or return to the rituals of Judaism. All their lives they had been taught that salvation is only from the Jews... only through the Law given through Moses. Because of fear of 'not getting it right' or fear of persecution, it was easy for them to fall back into the security of the rituals of Judaism. Most of us have not come out of a Jewish background or have friends or relatives who have... but many of us do know Catholics who have come to true faith. A Catholic who comes to true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can wrestle with the same kinds of doubt and fear. When a Catholic comes to true faith in Christ, usually their entire families are Catholic and have been for generations. They've been taught that salvation is only in Catholicism... in confession and the

Mass and the Eucharist and all the other trappings that trap them into a false sense of security from which escape becomes nearly impossible apart from the Sovereign work of God's Grace in their lives. Often a Catholic family will disown one who becomes a true believer and it's even worse for a Mormon. With Mormons, their entire lives, their marriage and family, their work, school and recreation... everything is intertwined. For a Mormon, from an old time Mormon family, to come to faith in Jesus Christ, especially in Utah or Idaho... their lives are turned completely upside down. Parents will disown... spouses will divorce... bosses will fire... what they experience can be similar to what these Hebrews went through when they became believers in Jesus Christ. Most of us don't realize what it's like to come out of a cult or false religious system.

On the other hand... there is an application for all of us in what the writer of Hebrews is addressing. Often, we may say and even think that, *'Of course I believe that Salvation is only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross, by God's Grace alone... that's what being a real Christian means!'* But when we look closer and examine ourselves a little more honestly, we might begin to recognize that our thinking and actions are, in fact, sometimes related to the thinking and actions of those in cults and false religions.

A Catholic believes that salvation is only through the Catholic Church... and he believes there are many things that he must do in addition to what Jesus has done to help secure his salvation... like going to Mass regularly. How often have we thought that when we skipped Church that God was less pleased with us, or thought, since we faithfully go to Church and Sunday School every week that God is more pleased with us?

A Catholic believes that one is only a true Catholic if he has been baptized into the Church, especially as an infant. How many of us have thought or known Christians who believe that a person is only really saved if they've been baptized?

A Catholic believes that he must confess to a priest regularly to be forgiven and that he mustn't die with unconfessed sin or he is lost. After he confesses to his priest... the priest tells him what act of penance he must perform... *'Say four Hail-Marys and three Our-fathers,'* his priest might say. He must do something to show God how sorry he is and to convince himself that he is having a part in his own salvation. How many of us believe that when we sin, we are unforgiven until we come to God and confess it and ask for forgiveness. Have we, or others we know, believed that if they sin and keep on sinning that they can become unsaved? How many denominations teach that they become separated from Christ when they sin, that their salvation is a constant back and forth between saved and unsaved? How many believe that being 'good enough' is an important part of being saved... that we are helping God with our salvation by being good enough to 'stay saved.'

A Catholic believes that when he dies, he will go to a place called purgatory where he will be punished to pay the penalty for all his sins... the place where his sins will be purged from his soul. How many Christians believe that if we aren't a good enough Christian, we will miss the Rapture and have to go through the purgatory of the seven year Tribulation period or believe that the Bible teaches that the Church must go through the Tribulation in order to be purified and made ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ?

Paul is the Apostle whom God used to teach Gentile believers what He is using the writer of Hebrews to teach Hebrew believers... that Salvation is only in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross and in nothing else... nothing! None of the rituals of Judaism accomplish or add to Salvation and nothing in our own 'churchness' accomplishes or adds to Salvation... nothing!

Do you remember the Tom Hanks movie, 'Castaway?' He was on a Fed-Ex plane that went down in the ocean. He was lost on an island for four years. He was able to use a number of things he found in Fed-Ex packages that were on the plane. His only companion was a volleyball he named 'Wilson,' on which he drew a face.

If one of those packages had contained a Bible which he read, and through which God led him to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ... if he had never been rescued and had never gone to Church, was never Baptized and never known of Communion, if he'd never heard a sermon or prayed a sinner's prayer, but simply believed that

Jesus Christ had died for his sin and that God had raised Him from the dead... he would still have been just as saved as any of us.

Does the Bible teach that we have to be good enough to stay saved? Is that what verse 6 means?

vs 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.' Many have misread this verse. It is not saying that we will be saved if we hold fast our confidence and rejoicing of hope... it is saying, if we are truly born again, we will hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end. That will have been the proof of our salvation.

He is saying, perseverance in faithfulness till the end will be a proof of salvation even though being good and doing the right thing does not save.

He goes on to expound on that truth over the next several verses. Now he begins to address those Hebrews from group #2... those who are intellectually convinced of the truth of the Gospel but who have not yet gone all the way to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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.”

Again, notice... he doesn't say, '***We will become*** partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.' He says, '***We have become*** partakers if'... an already accomplished fact which will be proven out as we hold fast till the end.

Here, He is not only warning them about remaining in unbelief, even in the face of all the proof throughout this letter, but also against their failing to come to faith, not because of persecution but rather because of being involved in sin... either not wanting to leave the sin or being ashamed to come to Christ because of the sin... and that is always a great danger... both for unbelievers but also for believers as well.

Countless people have said... 'God would never forgive me because of the things I've done or because of that 'thing' I did... God would never love someone like me.'

It's the deceitfulness of sin.

It's a danger for Christians as well. When we sin... we often think like Catholics... I must perform some act of penance, to show contrition... I must prove to God how sorry I am. Consequently, we don't come quickly to God in repentance in order to restore our relationship with Him which, by the way... is only broken from our

standpoint... God never leaves us or turns from us... we are the ones who turn from Him when we feel guilty from sin. How often do we fail to come to Him because of guilt? How long do we stay away from God while we beat ourselves up saying, 'I'm so rotten... I stink... I hate myself!' ... as we look sideways at God with one eye slightly open trying to judge when we believe we have convinced Him enough that it is OK now for us to come back to Him... after we've beat ourselves up for a sufficiently long time, we decide God will be convinced to let us approach Him. The deceitfulness of sin.

God is not honored when we do that. He is honored when we, by faith, believe what He says... that He loves us with an everlasting love that will never change... that there is nothing we could ever do to cause Him to love us less than He always does... and there is nothing we could ever do to cause Him to love us any more than He always does. That's why, in the very next chapter He says, 'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace** that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He says, 'When you are tempted... when you sin... come to Me Now!... anytime... all the time!

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ¹⁶ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? (everyone over 20 years old except Joshua and Caleb died in the wilderness) ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

He is saying to all those in group #2... don't allow yourself to be one who dies in the wilderness because of unbelief... open your eyes... open your heart... consider Jesus... turn to Him today and live.

And He says the same to us today and to our relatives, friends and neighbors... turn to Jesus Christ and live... today if you will hear His voice... turn to Him and live.