

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Website: www.churchredeemeraz.org

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Pastor/Teacher
Gary L. W. Johnson

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON BECAUSE OF HIS HEADSHIP OVER THE NEW COVENANT HOUSE; "CONSIDER JESUS..."

Beginning with ch. 3 and running through ch. 4, the writer to the Hebrews introduces his second contrast: The Son and Moses (3:1-4:13). The writer has stressed that the Son is greater than the angels, not only in His essence, His Divine glory (ch. 1), but also in the glory of His sufferings and humiliation, for as perfect man (2:5-18), He has achieved the divine intention that God had intended for man. Now in ch. 3, our author shows that Jesus is greater than Moses, as a son is greater than a servant. Jesus has also wrought a greater deliverance, and from a greater foe, than did Moses.

I. THE ADDRESS

v. 1 – THEREFORE (Gk. Conjunction *HOTHEN*, draws a conclusion from ch. 2:5-18), the force being “stop, look and listen!” HOLY BRETHREN (Gk. *ADELPHOI HAGIOI*), they are “set apart” or “sanctified”, not in and of themselves, but, as Hughes states, “as those who have been chosen and set apart by God (cf. 2:11). They are brothers because they share in the heavenly call, holy because they are called to separate themselves to the pure service of God.”¹

PARTAKERS (Gk. *METOCHOI*, cf. Lk. 5:7 for “partners” in fishing) OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, “This at once,” remarks A.W. Pink, “serves to emphasize the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, which knew only an earthly calling, with an earthly inheritance.”²

II. THE EXHORTATION

They are urged to CONSIDER (Gk. *KATANOESATE*, to put the mind down on, to fix the mind on.³ It does not mean simply to look at or notice a thing. Anyone can look at a thing or even notice it without really seeing it. The word means to fix the attention on something in such a way that its inner meaning, the lesson that it is designed to teach, may be learned.⁴ cf. Lk. 12:24) JESUS, THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION.

QUESTION: Why should we “consider Jesus...”? A.W. Pink lucidly responds, “As the APOSTLE He speaks to us from God, as our HIGH PRIEST he speaks for us to God. The two offices are conjoined in Jn. 13:3...thus He fills the whole space between God and us: as APOSTLE He is close to me; as PRIEST, He is close to God.”⁵

NOTE: As pointed out in the earlier lectures, the remedy that the writer of the Epistle seeks to teach these wavering Hebrews is this great fact of being caught up with the Person of Christ, “considering” Him. “This duty,” wrote John Brown, “is of radical importance to Christians. It is because we think so little about Him, that we love Him so little, trust in Him so little, so often neglect our duty, are so much influenced by ‘things seen and temporal’, and so little by ‘things unseen and eternal’... It is only by ‘considering’ the

truth about Jesus Christ as ‘the Apostle and High Priest of our profession’ that we can personally enjoy the benefits of His teaching as Prophet, and of His expiation and intercession as a High Priest. ... Truth must be understood in order to its being believed, and it must be considered in order to its being understood”⁶ From beginning to end the writer to the Hebrews labors to this goal. Careful thought should be given to this theme as we progress in our study of this portion of God’s Word. Another has written, “A very complete picture of Christ is drawn, line after line being added to fill out the majestic introductory representation (1:1-4). His person is contemplated throughout as the source or presupposition of the work accomplished by Him as the High Priest of men.”⁷ Let us therefore CONSIDER JESUS!

III. THE COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

A. The point of comparison between Moses and Jesus is that of faithfulness (v. 2).

QUESTION: How are we to understand the phrase HIS HOUSE (Heb. BAYIT and Gk. OIKOI)? The Biblical usage may be classified as follows:

1. LITERAL: The physical building (Gen. 19:2-4; Matt. 21:13).
 2. FIGURATIVE: Those who are united together with some inner bond of unity.
 - a. members of a family, with servants and a household head (Gen. 14:14; Heb 11:7)
 - b. the descendants of a man (Gen. 18:19; Lk. 2:4)
 - c. members of the same racial or religious group (Isa. 7:13; Jer. 31:31)
 3. SPIRITUAL
 - a. believers as “the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; I Pet. 2:5; 4:17)
 - b. the family of God in heaven (Jn. 14:1)
 - c. the believer’s glorified body (II Cor. 5:1)
- B. The contrast; Jesus’ superiority
1. The writer has shown by means of resemblance what subsisted between Jesus and Moses. Moses’ faithfulness (cf. Num. 12:7, 8) has been fully recognized; he was faithful as a SERVANT (Gk. *THERAPON*, not *DOULOS* or *DIAKONOS*; these words do not indicate voluntary service inspired by affection, but this is what *THERAPON* means; thus Moses’ faithfulness is emphasized). But Christ as the Son, HAS BEEN COUNTED WORTHY (Gk. *AXIOO*, to deem worthy, permanent situation described with definite claim of Christ’s superiority to Moses)⁸ OF MORE GLORY THAN MOSES. Why? Because Christ is the architect of the house in which Moses serves.

NOTE: Great as Moses was, the writer to the Hebrews calls on his readers to “consider” Him who is greater than Moses. How is Christ greater?

- I. In His person: Moses was a man of God, Christ was God Himself. As Barclay has written, “Moses knew a little about God; Jesus was God.”⁹
 - II. In His offices: Moses was a prophet, through whom God spoke; Christ was Himself “The Truth”, revealing perfectly the whole mind, will, and heart of God. Moses executed priestly functions (ex. 24:6; 32:11); but Christ is “the great High Priest”. Moses was “King of Jeshurun” (Dt. 33:5); Christ is “King of kings”.
 - III. In His work: Moses delivered Israel from Egypt, Christ delivers His people from the everlasting burnings. Moses built an earthly tabernacle; Christ is now preparing a place for us on High. Moses led Israel across the wilderness but not into Canaan itself; Christ will actually bring many son’s “unto glory.”¹⁰
2. Not only is Christ contrasted with Moses as architect to servant, but Christ is the Son over God’s house, whereas Moses is a servant in the house (vv. 5, 6a).

IV. THE COMFORTING CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGE

V. 6b. – WHOSE HOUSE (that is the household of believers) WE ARE (not shall become) IF WE HOLD FAST OUR CONFIDENCE AND THE BOAST OF OUR HOPE FIRM UNTIL THE END. “This,” remarks Hughes, “is entirely in line with the teaching of Christ, who declared: ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples’ (Jn. 8:31).”¹¹

QUESTION: Are we to conclude from this verse that the believer’s salvation is conditional?

NO, that is not what this verse, or for that matter any verse in the Bible, teaches. What, then, does it teach? ...it is intended to teach us this important truth, that none but those who “hold firm to the end the confidence and rejoicing of their hope” really belong to the family of God which is entrusted to the care of His Son Jesus Christ.¹² Nowhere in the New Testament more than here (Hebrews) do we find such repeated insistence on the fact that continuance in the Christian life is the test of reality. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints has as its corollary the salutary teaching that the saints are the people who persevere to the end.¹³ F.F. Bruce draws the following analogy, which should be kept in mind throughout the Epistle. “In the parable of the sower, the seed sown on rocky ground made a fair showing at first, but could not withstand the heat of the sun, ‘because it had no root’; and in the interpretation of the parable, this is said to refer to people ‘who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; and they have no root in themselves, but endure for awhile; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble’ (Mk. 4:5f, 16f). This is precisely what our author fears may happen with his readers; hence his constant emphasis on the necessity of their maintaining fearless confession and joyful hope.”¹⁴

ENDNOTES

¹ Philip Hughes, *Hebrews*, (Eerdmans, 1977), p. 125.

² A.W. Pink, *Hebrews*, (Baker, 1954), p. 157.

³ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, (Broadman, 1932), vol. V, p. 353.

⁴ W. Barclay, *Hebrews*, (Westminster, 1976), p. 29.

⁵ A. W. Pink *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁶ John Brown, *Hebrews*, (Banner of Truth, 1970), p. 157.

⁷ H.R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, (New York, 1924), p. 78.

⁸ A.T. Robertson, *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁹ W. Barclay, *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰ A.W. Pink, *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹¹ Hughes, *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹² J. Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹³ F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, (Eerdmans), p. 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.