

## THE SON, SERVANTS, AND STEWARDS

Hebrews 3:1–6 — *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."*

Where we have here *holy brethren* and *partakers of the heavenly calling*, we seem to have here a "switching of gears" to speaking directly to those who are in the faith. It is hard to think of this any other way. However, it should be understood that in the OT, the whole nation of Israel was considered to be God's covenant people and therefore holy. See 1 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 105, for instance. Notice what "touch not mine anointed" actually refers to. The addition of "heavenly calling" brings our minds again to things that are unique to the New Testament, specifically to Paul and the heavenly position of the Church which is His Body. (Ephesians 1:3, 2:6; Philippians 3:20, etc.)

We should though, in keeping with the context of Paul writing to Jews as Jews, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews", if you will, Philippians 3:5, this announcement from heaven before the giving of the Law:

Exodus 19:3–6 — *"And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."*

### CHRIST AS APOSTLE

Apostle means "one who is sent" or even better, as one who is sent for a particular purpose, officially. He is called the Apostle here, and in Matthew 15:24 He says who He was sent to specifically.

In Romans 15:8, we have that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers", and we should be believing in this. This helps in interpretation of some difficulties in reading the Gospels as we will see shortly.

### CHRIST AS HIGH PRIEST

This is one of the overarching themes in this epistle. We see it first in 2:17, then here in 3:1. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 mention it, and from chapters 7-10, it is all about Christ the High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 6:20).

### CHRIST WAS FAITHFUL

"A merciful and faithful high priest".

John 17:4, *"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."* In Hebrews 3:2, this is compared with Moses. Moses was also faithful, witnessed by the LORD Himself in Numbers 12:6-8:

Numbers 12:6–8 — *"And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"*

God raised up Moses and gave him (a mere man) a place above the place of all the other children of Israel. This was not to be spoken against, and those who did were judged severely. Understand this, looking back to Hebrews 2:1-2, and 10:28-29. When these are used to support "eternal insecurity", remember how and to whom they are spoken. They are not Christians (actual regenerated believers), but to Jews as such, knowing their history, and who now need to know where their rejection, not of God's called servant merely, but of His Son.

### CHRIST IS WORTHY OF MORE GLORY THAN MOSES

In verse 3, we have "this man" in referring to Christ. It is the man Christ Jesus that we are dealing here. As man he has more glory than Moses. The Jews, especially the religious Jews who returned from Babylon and had position as such in the Roman province of Judea (think about that as the place to which Israel had fallen) held a high regard for Moses, as well they should. "We are Moses' disciples" was the claim of the Pharisees that rejected Christ. He told them that if they really believed Moses, they would believe Him (John 5:46).

"He who hath builded the house" takes me back to 2 Samuel 7:13, where it is God that is to build the house of David. The Israelites here, as they had in the past, needed to be reminded that it is God's house, not theirs, and that also they are to know that Jesus the Son of God is over the house because it is His House.

*"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"* (John 1:11). Sad, considering the present state of affairs, where it is antithetical to Judaism to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Israel was the nation built by God through Moses, as Exodus 19:1-7 say. Moses was a faithful steward in this house (Numbers 12:7), but it is not his house.

The House of Israel belongs to Jesus Christ.

*"All things were created by Him and for Him"*, Colossians 1:16. That includes the House of Israel, even though now they are in rebellion and rejection of their God.

*"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful"*, 1 Corinthians 4:2

Lets consider some of God's OT stewards:

- Moses
- Joshua
- The judges
- The kings
- The prophets
- The Sanhedrin
- Israel itself (Romans 3:2)

Christ the Son is greater than all of His stewards. Consider this idea when reading some teaching in Luke regarding stewards, as in Luke 12:42-48 and Luke 16:1-13. Taking these to be about Christians makes for many difficulties, but if about Israelites and specific Israelites, many difficulties go away when understood in their proper context.

## ISRAEL'S REVERENCE FOR MOSES

As we can see in Acts 21:18-26, the Jews, even those believing in Jesus Christ still had a high reverence for Moses. The unbelieving religious Jews also did, and accused those following Christ to be against Moses, as we see in Acts 6:8-15.

Stephen then stands up and shows that it is not those that follow after Jesus Christ, the Son of God who are against Moses, but those who reject Him that are. Acts 7:51-53.

Moses received good testimony that he was a faithful steward over the house of God, but that house belongs to Jesus Christ the Son. Christ owns the house, and those Israelites can now enjoy the blessings of that house —IF— they hold fast the confidence to the end, Hebrews 3:6.

## HOLDING FIRM TO THE END

This “holding fast firm unto the end” is a concerning passage for “eternal security” advocates, myself being one. But we should be faithful to the Scripture and form our position from Scripture and not conform Scripture to our position. This has caused many to say Hebrews is not for Christians at all and has more to do with the tribulation period than now. It also has caused many to find reasons to reject Pauline authorship. That position is about doctrine and not about evidence.

There is a better answer that I believe is faithful to the Scriptures. Staying consistent throughout the epistle, this is to the children of the covenant. Firm to the end is not directed to the Christian to remain a Christian in His own power, or as the Reformed doctrine says “perseverance of the saints”. It is directed to faithful Israelites—those who wish to remain faithful to the God of the Covenant—to become faithful to Jesus Christ the Son, who is the owner of the house that Moses began to build. In the last chapter, we have this about “the end”:

Hebrews 13:7–8 — *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering **the end of their conversation**. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”*

Remember that the place of the Israelites as children of the covenant did not begin the same way as our place in God’s family does. Theirs began with Abraham in Genesis 12, and comes to completion with Christ. That long history makes a difference. If we read this as exactly the same as us we read into the text some contradictory things that are clarified by the distinction.

They are children of the covenant, as in Acts 3:25, said to *unbelieving Israelites*. None of those covenant promises to them are going to be fulfilled to an unbelieving nation. The remnant of Israel does get to be a partaker of that even now, and there absolutely will, on the authority of Scripture be a day when “all Israel will be saved”, Romans 11:25–27.

We as Gentiles were strangers to the covenants of promise as Paul says in Ephesians 2:11 and 12, but are made nigh by the blood of Christ as he says in verse 13. Our beginning and end all begin with Christ

crucified. The children of Israel as God's covenant people were called before that, but they must come to Christ to receive the end of their calling.

They will partake of the benefits of being Christ's house if they come to Him in faith.