

Hebrews 3:1-6

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Jesus was faithful to God just as Moses was faithful to God. Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant but Jesus was faithful as a Son—the Inheritor. We can be a part of God's household as inheritors as well, if we hold fast.

Here at the start of Chapter 3, the Pauline Author refers to his audience as *holy brethren* and *partakers of a heavenly calling* (v 1). The Pauline Author makes it clear throughout Hebrews that his audience is in no danger of losing their entrance into heaven. He recognizes that they are believers and will live in eternity with God.

He is encouraging these believers to focus on the greatness of Jesus and live in obedience to Him, that we might inherit all He has for us. In other words, the Pauline Author is telling us what is in our best interest.

In order to possess the inheritance God has granted us as believers, we must follow the High Priest (Jesus) and His faithful example on earth. We are made *holy brethren* and *partakers of the heavenly calling* through faith in Jesus. This is a gift, received through faith in Jesus alone (John 3:14-15; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jesus Christ is the Apostle and the High Priest of our confession (v 1). The word *Apostle* means “a sent one.” Jesus was sent by God to earth in order to die for the sins of the world (Philippians 2:5-9; Hebrews 10:7). That Jesus is a *High Priest* means He acts as an intermediary on our behalf and allows us to have unity and be companions (be *partakers*) with God. Because of Christ and His ongoing work on our behalf, we can be companions of God and possess the inheritance to which we are called.

The Pauline Author writes that Jesus was *faithful to Him* [God] *who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house* (v 2). The same Greek word “oikos” translated here as *house* is also used by Jesus to describe the nation and people of Israel:

“But He [Jesus] answered and said ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house [“oikos”] of Israel.’
(Matthew 15:24)

It is likely here that *Moses* being faithful in *all His house* refers to Moses being appointed as the leader to rule over Israel. In the same way that Moses was the leader over Israel, Jesus was appointed to lead the entire earth (Matthew 28:18). The image for Moses is that Israel is God's *house*, and Moses is the servant-leader appointed to lead the *house*.

Similar to the faithfulness of Moses, Jesus was faithful and remains faithful to God *as a Son over His house*, which is the entire creation, as we saw in Hebrews 1:5, 8, 13. Jesus was crowned with the glory and honor of reigning over creation as a human. He received this reward from His Father because of His faithfulness.

We also saw this in Hebrews 2:9, where Jesus was “crowned” with the “glory and honor” of reigning over creation because of His faithfulness, having been willing to follow His Father’s will to suffer and die for the sins of the world (John 3:16).

Now the Pauline Author compares Jesus to a builder:

For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God (vv 3–4).

Jesus is both the builder of *the house* of creation, having made it all (Colossians 1:16-17) as well as the redeemer of all creation, having rescued it from sin.

The reference to *glory* in the phrase indicating Jesus is *worthy of more glory than Moses* in vv 3-4 refers back to the application of *glory* in the previous chapter, the glory of having been given the authority to reign over earth (Hebrews 2:7, 9, 10). Chapter 2 discusses God’s choice to set humans over His creation in spite of humans being lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:7). Psalm 8 (quoted in Hebrews 2) tells us God make this choice in order to silence the enemy (Psalm 8:2).

Because He was willing to become human and suffer death on the cross, Jesus has been granted the authority to reign over the earth (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:5-9; Hebrews 2:9). Jesus desires to reward all believers who are faithful servants by having them join with Him in carrying out His reign as a servant leader (Hebrews 2:10; Revelation 3:21).

Moses was given authority to judge Israel. He was faithful to lead the nation (God’s *house*). Jesus Christ is God, and created all things (Colossians 1:16-17). Then as a human, Jesus was granted authority over creation because of His faithfulness (Philippians 2:8-9). Jesus therefore has greater honor than Moses, who ruled over Israel, as Jesus rules over all. To the Hebrew audience to which this letter is addressed, the point being made is the vast superiority of Christ to the venerated lawgiver Moses.

The Pauline Author of Hebrews continues to emphasize the superiority of Christ in all things. The author desires that his believing Jewish friends place their confidence in Christ above all. He urges them not to place trust in lesser things, things like religious sacrifice and rule-following. All these things (including the law of Moses) point to Christ, and our dedication should be to follow Him, even as He followed the will of His Father.

Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later (v 5). Moses was a great leader because He was *faithful* as a *servant* to God, who made the *house* that is Israel. Moses provided an excellent witness or *testimony* because he was *faithful* in leading God’s people as a *servant* leader.

The word *testimony* translates the Greek word “martyrion” and could also be translated “witness.” Moses’s example/testimony as a leader pointed forward to things that were to occur in the future (*spoken later*).

Moses’s testimony of things *spoken later* could apply to the prophecy that the coming Messiah would be like a second Moses:

“I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”
(Deuteronomy 18:18)

This prophecy came in response to the people asking Moses to shield them from speaking directly to God, lest they die (Deuteronomy 18:16). The prophecy was met in Jesus, who spoke directly to them as God, but also as their “countryman.”

But Jesus was more than just a second Moses. He was also a high priest and king after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:10), as well as a superior king of the House of David (Matthew 1:1).

Part of Moses’s faithfulness was in diligently leading Israel (*His house*), even interceding for them to his own detriment (Exodus 32:32). Jesus serves as a Son and ruler over the entire heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). Therefore Jesus *has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses*. This is because Jesus has been granted more authority than Moses. The *glory* being spoken of here is consistent with the use of *glory* in the previous chapter. It refers to the privilege of being granted the authority to rule (Hebrews 2:7, 9, 10).

Jesus is greater than Moses; Jesus has *more glory* because He was given authority over all the earth. Jesus is also greater than Moses, having entered the true tabernacle in heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for all (Hebrews 9:11-12). Moses’s “house” was the nation of Israel. Jesus’s “house” is all the earth.

We can be a part of those who rule as servant leaders in that house, along with Christ, if we hold fast our hope, and endure in our faith. *Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end* (v 6).

Moses, as leader of Israel, is said to be a *servant* in *His house*, God’s nation of Israel. Moses is called a *servant* even though he was appointed the leader of all of Israel. Jesus is said to be a *Son over His house*, apparently referring to Jesus being given reign over all the earth (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:5, 8, 13, 2:9).

It seems then that since Moses as leader of Israel is called *servant*, then to be of Jesus’s *house* would indicate sharing His reign over the earth. In order to share Jesus’s reign, we must *hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end* of our lives here on earth.

We will see in the next chapter that the first generation Moses led out of Egypt failed to possess their inheritance because they faltered in their faith when they reached the border of the Promised Land. They did not possess their inheritance of reigning in the land due to their lack of faith (Hebrews 4:2).

Believers in the current era can gain the immense reward of joining Christ to reign as a part of His house by holding *fast our confidence and the boast of our hope* in Him, firm until the *end* of our lives. There is no “retirement” from God’s call to live faithfully. As we will see, the recipients of this letter had lived faithfully up until this time, even rejoicing in losing their possessions because of their testimony (Hebrews 10:32-36).

The Pauline Author's exhortation is for them to continue in this faithfulness until the end of their lives. He does not want them to fall short of possessing the reward of their inheritance. This is consistent with Paul's admonitions throughout his writings. One example follows:

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him.”
(2 Timothy 2:12a)

Believers have a choice: we can have our faith displaced, and lose our confidence that Christ's reward is for our best. If we do this then we lose the reward of our inheritance. Hebrews exhorts us to be obedient to Christ and be a partaker of ruling His house along with Him. His “house” happens to be all of creation.

In His parable of the talents, Jesus described gaining this reward of increased responsibility by saying “enter into the joy of your Master.” It will be the greatest possible joy as a human to be fully restored in fellowship with God in fulfilling our design to reign over the earth in harmony with Him, creation, and other servant leaders.

This is a theme that runs throughout the Bible. Revelation 3:21 promises that those who “overcome as [Jesus] overcame” will share His throne—His reign over the earth. Romans 8:17 promises that believers will be “joint heirs with Christ” (i.e., share rulership of His household) if we suffer as He suffered, enduring rejection from the world.

At the beginning of this chapter, the Pauline Author called his audience “holy brethren,” and here he includes himself in the warning using *we*, in saying *if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end*. Believers gain the reward of regaining the “glory and honor” of being “crowned” to reign over creation (Hebrews 2:7-9) only if we hold our hope, live in faith, *firm until the end*.

As we saw in v 1 where the letter's recipients are called “holy brethren,” the Pauline Author considers himself and his audience to be justified (made right) before God, so this warning is not about losing our salvation of being justified before God; that is secured. The salvation being spoken of is deliverance from the adverse effects of the Fall of Man. God's original design for humans was to reign over the earth in harmony with Him, creation, and one another, but because of the Fall, this design was thwarted (Hebrews 2:3).

If we turn away from God during our lives, we will miss out on our inheritance reward with Christ, which is to be fully restored to our original design. The author asserts that believers must boldly, confidently, and tenaciously hold to what we know to be true of Jesus if we want to receive the reward of being a ruler with Him in His household, which is the earth (v 6).

This opportunity to be a part of Jesus's household who rules creation is similar to the language in 1 Peter 2:5 that says we “are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

As believers in Christ, we have the priestly responsibility of being faithful and obedient to God, and if we are being obedient by fulfilling these duties, then we are of God's house even now, in this life. The warning is not that we could lose being saved from spiritual death. Rather, the warning is to hold fast so that we live as being a part of God's ruling household in this life. This

is to live a life of love and service to others, holding fast the faith and unwaveringly standing for the truth. If we live faithfully in this manner, then we will gain an even greater reward in the coming age.

Even though our eternal salvation from spiritual death is secure because of what Jesus has done, we could miss out on the opportunity to be God's house in this life, and as a result lose the opportunity to share in Christ's inheritance to reign in the earth.

Believers are exhorted to hold firmly to their hope in Christ until the end of their lives on this earth. The reason is that it will be more than worth it (1 Corinthians 2:9).

In the next section, the Pauline Author uses the example of the Israelites to further illustrate his warning.

Biblical Text

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; 2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. 3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.