

Hebrews 3:1-6

Sermon notes

Why did he write this?

Just finished saying how Jesus became incarnate, he had to become like us so that he could provide propitiation for the sins of the people. So because he suffered, he is able to help those who suffer.

Therefore, holy brothers (building them up again), you who share in this heavenly calling (what is this heavenly calling...a calling to be in the family of God...to make His glory known), consider Jesus—he is the apostle and high priest of a greater degree than what Moses was.

Moses was in a sense the apostle and high priest for Israel; apostle—told people about God; priest—represents people to God. Jesus is even greater than Moses. Why? Moses was a servant and Jesus is the Son. That is the difference. They would get that. Even though Moses saw the glory of God; Jesus has seen the Father, not just the Father's glory, but has SEEN the FATHER. He and the Father are One.

Prophets...Angels...

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (for every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God). Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Observations:

Therefore—what precedes this? The argument that Jesus was made like his brothers to become a faithful high priest and offer a pleasing sacrifice. He partook of flesh and blood, and was able to destroy the work of the evil one.

Holy brothers—reminder that he is addressing those who are in the faith.
You who share a heavenly calling—same as holy brothers

Something we share; share with whom? With one another and possibly with Jesus as well. He was called to be an apostle—sent by the Father.

34.8 μέτοχος^b, ου m: one who shares with someone else as an associate in an enterprise or undertaking—‘companion, partner.’ καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ ‘and they signaled to their companions in the other boat’ Lk 5:7; διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου ‘therefore, God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness more than he did your companions’ He 1:9.¹

Paul speaks of the “calling from above,” that effectual call into salvation which comes from heaven and is to heaven (Phil. 3:14). This expression in Hebrews 3:1 speaks therefore of the Church. Israel has an earthly calling and an earthly destiny. The Church has a heavenly calling and a heavenly destiny. Thus does the writer mark the Jews to whom he was writing, as belonging to the Church and as distinct from Israel.²

CONSIDER JESUS...what does it mean to consider—to contemplate, [do not disregard]

The apostle and high priest is a appostional clause that is helping to further support—in a subtle way—the person of Jesus—offering more information about Jesus for them to consider; not giving full definition to Jesus—but for the case that he is now making that Jesus is superior to Moses; he uses this structure to buttress his argument.

Words That Modify ὁμολογίας

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek–English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (446). New York: United Bible Societies.

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader (Heb 3:1). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

- *articular relation*: The word ὁμολογίας is modified by τῆς (article) in Heb 3:1, word 12 (τῆς is within the current clausal unit, before ὁμολογίας).
- *adjective-like relation*: The word ὁμολογίας is modified by ἡμῶν (pronoun) in Heb 3:1, word 14 (ἡμῶν is within the current clausal unit, after ὁμολογίας).³

Why consider Christ? Christ is superior to prophets—that meant that he was superior in the words that He spoke; he is superior to the angels—the big point was that the angels were seen as divine messengers of God, Christ brought God’s divine message. Now he is saying consider Jesus even against Moses who was seen as the one through whom Israel was established into the land, a prophet, priest and king himself. What is it about Moses that the writer of Hebrews felt compelled to bring in? how did the Jews feel about Moses? He was seen as the deliver of Israel; he was seen as a friend of God...the Jews thought of Moses as their father

There was a purpose in sending the Son; stated in the prior chapter 2; the Son had to fulfill what was left incomplete. Even Moses, who was a faithful servant; left things incomplete. He was a servant and not the Son.

The apostle and high priest of our confession; apostle (sent one)—

the author structures this; the High Priest—who is Jesus is not only the substance of our confession, he also participates in the confession as its high priest; confession is in the same clausal unit as the high priest; therefore —the chief confessor of the confession itself. He therefore gives this confession all the more authority.

This verb is often used in the LXX of God sending Moses on a commission for Him (Ex. 3:-7:), and is used of God sending the Lord Jesus on a commission (Luke 10:16; John 3:17, 5:36, 6:29). The two apostles are now compared. ⁴

³ Lukaszewski, A. L., Dubis, M., & Blakley, J. T. (2011). The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament, SBL Edition: Expansions and Annotations (Heb 3:1). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader (Heb 3:1). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Confession: must have had a mutual confession, something that was regularly said that would have been identifiable to this group of Jewish believers.

Homologia; same word...confession, acknowledgment that one makes (4:14, 10:23, 1 Ti 6:12)

what role does confession play today? What am I confessing to? To whom do I confess? What does it mean to be part of a confessional church—This confession of Christ, which is judicially pronounced before the authorities, is the model of forensic confession to which the Christian is called in discipleship (Mt. 10:32; Lk. 12:8), the example of public declaration which the one who bears witness knows that he is obliged to make (Jn. 1:20; 9:22; 12:42), and also the basic constituent in the liturgical and cultic baptismal confession which is solemnly recited at reception of the sacrament and ordination. Here, too, a decisive role is played by the fact that this confession is public (1 Tm. 6:12: ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων, Mt. 10:32: ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρός μου, Lk. 12:8: ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ), binding (the apostle in his command [παραγγέλλω] refers back to the confession already made by Timothy, 1 Tm. 6:12f.), and definitive (Mt. 10:32; Lk. 12:8; 1 Tm. 6:12 f.). Just because Timothy has made this binding confession he is committed to passing on the proclamation, keeping the commandment and walking without blame until Christ is manifested.⁵

Confession is often the answer to a question. Thus in baptism it is a reply to the question put by the minister. In the teaching conversation between Jesus and the disciples recorded in Mt. 16:13–20 (which does not contain the liturgical and confessional ὁμολογεῖν) Jesus Himself is the questioner. In Jn. 1:19–34 we also find alongside one another witness in the form of answer and sayings embedded in a particular situation. At Ac. 8:37 some MSS record an express dialogue between the minister and the candidate, obviously in a fixed form of words. The authentic confession: σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος (Mt. 16:16), is answer to a question, rejection of other human possibilities, insight of the Holy Spirit, revelation (ἀποκάλυψις), commitment to discipleship, scriptural exposition in power, final and definitive word, subscription and seal. If the disciple is always questioned personally, he answers representatively in the name and on the commission of the community. Even though Peter's saying is the personal gift of God in a specific situation, it becomes the saying of the community. Peter speaks as the first among the μαθηταί, as a member of the Messianic ἐκκλησία.

It must be conceded, of course, that knowledge of the message does not as such include genuine confession (Mt. 10:19; Jn. 12:42), and indeed that true confession is no protection

⁵ . Vol. 5: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (211). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

against future denial. In openly confessing the authority of Jesus, one takes His side in the battle of spirits. The word of confession thus has divisive force, 1 C. 12:3. If Israel in the *shema* confesses the lordship of God (Dt. 6:4), Paul weaves the “one God” and “one Lord” into a unity, 1 C. 8:6; Eph. 4:5 f. Confession of Christ’s lordship has in view especially His resurrection and exaltation (R. 10:9; Phil. 2:11). The confession is thus linked with a series of christological formulae which developed historically and bear different senses. Behind every act of confession stands Christ Himself as the true Witness (Rev. 1:5) who as the prototype of history, the bearer of God’s Spirit, and the eschatological Witness and Judge, sustains the community’s confession.

New insights are yielded by the very fact that primitive Christian proclamation (κήρυγμα) and teaching (διδασχῆ) are described and depicted as confessing (ὁμολογεῖν) and witnessing (μαρτυρεῖν). All such terms as κηρύσσειν, εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, ὁμολογεῖν, μαρτυρεῖν have a proclamatory character which expresses a commitment and an obligation, a bond and a claim. They all find their startingpoint in an event of history vouched for by a specific tradition. They interpret this event and prevent its evaporation into myth and theory. In the confession of the community is a new and genuine historicity far surpassing all false traditionalism and intellectualism, all the non-obligatoriness of mere opinion and all mythology. In the last resort there is in the variety of meaning a theological unity which confers on man a true self-understanding and which at the same time integrates him into an eschatological fellowship to the praise of God.⁶

Preposition ‘in’, most likely a preposition of reference; he was faithful in reference to all of Gods’ people. (the direct Scriptural reference is the issue with Aaron and Miriam)

Comparison of the builder of the house to the house itself. The builder of the house gets more glory because they look at him and recognize that it was his genius, ingenuity that created the beauty of the house. We celebrate the work he has done. So, Jesus built God’s house (his kingdom) on earth...part of this was built through the ministry of Moses. Moses was seen as a servant in God’s house, not as the architect of God’s house. Moses did not write the 10 commandments, but received them and came down and administered them. Moses did not lead the people through the wilderness, rather, followed the cloud and the pillar of fire—he was 2nd in that sense. There is a difference between a son and a servant in a household. No matter how great the servant is, the servant is never greater than the son. The servant does not gain the inheritance, rather, the son gains the inheritance. That is why the writer is saying that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses.

⁶ . Vol. 5: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (211–212). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Jesus' throne established forever: "I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and he will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever. 1 Chron. 17:12-15

(interesting that he uses: son, house, kingdom, throne)—the throne is forever; if a throne is forever—does that mean the king of that throne reigns forever?

Who is the 'house of God'—it is us! We have become this house of God; God's people have become this living house...these living stones which God has produced. Or just that this throne will not be overturned. Also, does this help answer the question about why God did not send an angel to be the sacrifice? He had to send His Son because it is the priest who becomes King. An angel is also a servant and is not greater than the king. It also dignifies us, because Jesus (of greater worth than angels) came down and became man, thus elevating all mankind. We were so worthy of that in God's estimation that He sent his very best. Angels had a history of screwing up; this would not get screwed up.

NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THE HOUSE DOES NOT BUILD ITSELF; BUT RELIES ON THE BUILDER TO BUILD THE HOUSE. (ὕπὸ is outside of the current clausal unit). THE BUILDER DOES NOT COME FROM WITHIN THE HOUSE; HE IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE IN THAT SENSE.

Need to give background to Moses. Moses statue (Michaelangelo—why did he have horns)...

(v. 5) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later⁷ Recognized as a prophet; there was no one in Israel history like Moses—the greatest of all prophets—gave Law to Israel.

⁷ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. 2001 (Heb 3:5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Now Moses was faithful in all of God's house as a servant

Therapon (Θεραπον) speaks of service that is of a nobler and a freer character than that of *doulos* (δουλος) (bondslave). The verb is used of the physician's care of the sick. Xenophon uses it of the gods taking care of men, and of men worshipping the gods. The word is used in the Book of Wisdom 10:16 of Moses in the phrase, "servant of the Lord." The use of the word in our present passage is indicative of the close relationship which existed between Jehovah and Moses, and of the fact that his services were of an exceptionally high and important character, and valued by Him.⁸

In the NT ὑπηρέτης is employed to refer to many diverse types of servants, such as attendants to a king, officers of the Sanhedrin, attendants of magistrates, and, especially in the Gospel of John, Jewish Temple guards.⁹

(3:6) Whereas Moses was a servant (en (ἐν)) in God's house, Messiah was Son (epi (ἐπι)) over that house. Both were faithful in their respective positions and capacities. But Messiah's exalted position and more important work enhanced the quality of His fidelity over that of Moses, since both His position as Son and work as High Priest involved peculiar difficulties and temptations to which Moses never was subject. Thus, Messiah is better than Moses, and the Testament which He inaugurated is better and takes the place of the one Moses was instrumental in founding.

The word "house" in verses 5, 6 must be defined by the context in which it is found. The general application in all instances of its use in these verses is to the house of God. In the case of Moses, it was the house of God as related to Israel. In the case of Messiah, it was the house of God as related to the family of God in all ages. In the case of the "we" of verse 6, it is the house of God as related to the saints of this dispensation.

Now, the writer, keeping in mind the fact that only part of his readers were really saved, and the other part were merely making a profession of salvation, and the latter under stress of persecution were in danger of relapsing back to apostate Judaism, proposes to these readers a test whereby they can tell whether they really belong to the house of God or not, that is, whether they are really saved or not. The "if" in the Greek text is the particle *ean* (ἐάν), introducing a future, unfulfilled, hypothetical condition. The writer is proposing a condition as yet unfulfilled. If these Jews, to whom he is writing, hold fast their confidence and the rejoicing of their professed hope in Messiah firm to the end of their lives, that fact shows that they belong to the house of God, in

⁸ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader* (Heb 3:5). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (459). New York: United Bible Societies.

other words, are saved. If they do not do so, but instead, renounce that profession and return to the abrogated system of Levitical sacrifices, that shows that they never were saved. It is not the *retention* of salvation that is in question here, but the *possession* of salvation. The text does not say, “whose house will we continue to be,” but “whose house are we.” Frequently the verb of being is left out by the Greek writer, it being understood in the light of the context. But it is in the Greek text here, and in the present tense. Therefore, the subject of the security of the believer is not in view here.

This verse must be understood in the light of its historical background and context. The purpose of the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews was to meet a certain condition in the first century. It was to reach Jews who had outwardly left the temple sacrifices, had identified themselves with the visible Christian Church, had made a profession of Messiah as High Priest, and who were at the time suffering persecution from apostate Judaism in an effort to force them to renounce their professed faith in Messiah and return to the First Testament sacrifices. Now—if under the pressure of this persecution they should hold fast their confidence and rejoicing of their hope in Messiah to the end of their lives, that would show that they were saved, and if not, that would indicate that they had never been saved. This verse therefore cannot be made to refer in a secondary application to the present day, since the conditions in the first century which the verse was written to meet, do not obtain today.

The words “hold fast” are the translation of *katecho* (ΚΑΤΕΧΩ). Among its meanings is one that vividly illustrates its use here. It is used in nautical circles in the meaning of “holding one’s course toward.” Luke uses it in Acts 27:40 where the storm-tossed ship held its course toward shore. The Authorized Version translates “made toward shore.” If these Hebrews would hold their course in life steadfastly along the lines of their present profession, that would show that they were saved. If they veered away from that course, that would show that they never had been saved, but that their profession of Messiah had been, not one of the heart but of the head.

The word “confidence” is the translation of *parresia* (ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ), which is a compound of *pan* (ΠΑΝ) “all,” and *hrema* (ῥῆμα) “speech,” literally “all speech.” Its dominant idea is one of the boldness and confidence which are exhibited in freedom of speech, the unreserved, unfettered flow of language which is opposed to fear, ambiguity, and reserve. This confidence or boldness would characterize the speech and behavior of the Jew who was actually a possessor of salvation and not merely a professor of the same, but would soon disappear in the case of a mere professor should he turn away from Messiah back to the sacrifices. The writer reminds his readers that the word of God is alive and powerful, and able to penetrate beneath any mere profession (4:12, 13). It is important to note that a spirit of rejoicing must accompany this spirit of confidence, stamping it as genuine, for a simulated confidence does not give rise to any real rejoicing.¹⁰

25.158 παρρησία, ας *f*: a state of boldness and confidence, sometimes implying intimidating circumstances—‘boldness, courage.’ προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ

¹⁰ Wuest, K. S. (1997). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader (Heb 3:5–6). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

τῆς χάριτος ‘let us boldly approach the throne of grace’ He 4:16; μὴ ἀποβάλητε οὖν τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν, ἥτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθαποδοσίαν ‘do not lose your courage which brings a great reward’ He 10:35.¹¹

How little the public nature of the work of Jesus as perceived and understood by the cosmos is the *parrhesia* of the Revealer may be seen from the fact that the public work of Jesus is hidden from the Jews as a Messianic work: ἐκύκλωσαν οὖν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ· ἕως πότε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις; εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός, εἰπὸν ἡμῖν παρρησίᾳ. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἶπον ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ πιστεύετε· τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ ... ταῦτα μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ, 10:24f. They would like to be able to lay hold of Jesus in direct self-witness. But they receive from Him the answer that open witness is given in His works. This witness is grasped, however, only by faith, which recognises the eschatological character of His works. Faith alone understands the figurative speech of Jesus, which is the result and reflection of His revelation. Jesus says in 11:11: Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται. But according to the direct statement of the author the disciples misunderstand Him, 11:12f. Hence we read in 11:14: τότε οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρρησίᾳ· Λάζαρος ἀπέθανεν ... This παρρησίᾳ λέγειν means concretely “to speak non-figuratively,” “openly,” “without concealment.” The misunderstanding of the disciples is not based, of course, on misunderstanding of the image as such, but on misunderstanding of the matter, since, in spite of the presence of Jesus, they do not realise that death is only sleep. They do not believe in Him who is the resurrection and the life. This concealment is radically bound up with the life of Jesus right up to the coming again in the Paraclete. His speech is now in metaphor and riddle. In that day Jesus will proclaim παρρησίᾳ, 16:25ff. This is the day when the disciples will pray in the name of Jesus and on the basis of their love and faith they will receive directly from God. It is the day when the πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας comes, 16:13. The *parrhesia* of Jesus is thus given with the presence of the risen Lord in the Spirit. That the believer can pierce the concealment by the → παροιμίαι may be seen from the continuation in 16:29ff.

In Mk. 8:32 παρρησίᾳ is the opp. of ἐν παραβολαῖς and means “open.” The ref. is to the plain teaching given to the disciples, as distinct from the public (Mk. 2:9), on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The appended Peter story (8:32b f.) shows that the very openness hides Jesus from His disciples (cf. Mk. 9:32; 10:32). In Mk., too, Jesus can ἐν παρρησίᾳ εἶναι only for faith.¹²

¹¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek–English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹² . Vol. 5: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (880–881). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

1John 5:14; and this is the **confidence** (used 31 times in the NT) that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Ephesians 3:12, Acts 28:31

freespokenness, openness, frankness,

The presupposition of **παρρησία** is that one should be a full citizen of a Gk. *polls*. At the height of Gk. democracy the full citizen alone has the right to say anything publicly in the **ἐκκλησία**. Aristoph. Thes., 540 f.: οὔσης παρρησίας κάξὸν λέγειν ὅσαι πάρεσμεν ἄσταί. Aliens and slaves have no such right. ¹³

Confidence (parrhesia) comes through faith; an active faith/belief that Jesus is the Son. This confidence comes with telling;

Holding fast:

It is also used b. of holding fast spiritual values, instruction received or a course or attitude begun (in the good sense): Lk. 8:15; 1 C. 11:2; 15:2 (“if to this day you have kept (in memory) and still keep (in your hearts) the word which I once declared to you as good news”); 1 Th. 5:21; Hb. 3:6, 14; 10:23.

Maintaining the blessings of salvation received is here again, as in the simple form, regarded as a particularly important Christian virtue. We can understand this in the light of the early Christian situation. The Christian state is one of blissful possession and yet also of a long struggle for survival and recognition in a world which views things so very differently. Only by this holding fast can present possession become eternal and heavenly possession. In the last resort this is true of the Church in every age.¹⁴

Luke 4:42—would have kept him from leaving...same word; hold fast; idea is to hold onto something or someone.

¹³ . Vol. 5: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (872). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

¹⁴ . Vol. 2: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (829). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Starts off the passage with the idea of partners (The word translated “partakers” here is translated “partners” in Luke 5:7, where it describes the relationship of four men in the fishing business: they were in it together.¹⁵

The word SERVANT (not doulos—different word, only time used in the NT)

Though this word is common in the LXX, it is used in the NT only of Moses at Hb. 3:5 (cf. Nu. 12:7), and the important point here is the contrast with Jesus, who is the Son where Moses is the servant. Cf. Gl. 4:1 ff.¹⁶

The Greek word translated “servant” (Hb. 3:5) is not the usual New Testament word for servant or slave. This word carries the meaning of “a voluntary servant who acts because of affection.” In the New Testament, it is used only of Moses. At the beginning of his ministry, Moses was a bit hesitant and resisted God’s call. But once he surrendered, he obeyed out of a heart of love and devotion.¹⁷

The word “confidence” literally means “freedom of speech, openness.” When you are free to speak, then there is no fear and you have confidence. A believer can come with boldness (same word as “confidence”) to the throne of grace (Hb. 4:16) with openness and freedom and not be afraid. We have this boldness because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Hb. 10:19). Therefore, we should not cast away our confidence, no matter what the circumstances might be. We should not have confidence in ourselves, because we are too prone to fail; but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ who never fails.¹⁸

¹⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Hb 3:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁶ . Vol. 3: Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964– (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (132). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

¹⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Hb 3:3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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The wandering of Israel in the wilderness is a major topic in this section. Two men in that nation—Caleb and Joshua—illustrate the attitude described in Hebrews 3:6. Everybody else in Israel over the age of twenty was to die in the wilderness and never enter the Promised Land (see Num. 14:26–38). But Caleb and Joshua believed God and God honored their faith. For forty years, Caleb and Joshua watched their friends and relatives die; but those two men of faith had confidence in God’s Word that they would one day enter Canaan. While others were experiencing sorrow and death, Caleb and Joshua rejoiced in confident hope. As believers, we know that God is taking us to heaven, and we should reveal the same kind of joyful confidence and hope.²⁰

¹⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Heb 3:3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Heb 3:3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

For all his greatness as the mediator of the old covenant, Moses, even if he wanted to, could not ultimately do what was necessary to effect salvation for God's people. As a sinner, Moses was unable to render that perfect obedience needed to set men and women right with the Lord ([Lev. 18:5](#); [Num. 20:1–13](#)). He was finally able to bring the nation to the edge of Canaan and thus fulfill the promises of God on that front, but he was not able to take them into their full inheritance (Deut. 34).

Knowing that he would not be the one under whom Israel would inherit the earth, Moses looked forward to another prophet to lead the people of God (18:15). Today's passage informs us that this prophet is none other than the man Christ Jesus ([Heb. 3:1–6](#)). But this Jesus is no ordinary man, the author of Hebrews informs us. While he could point to Moses' faults in order to prove Jesus is superior to him, Hebrews instead looks at the status of Moses as a servant versus the status of Jesus as a son (3:6) — the Son of God coequal to the Father in power and authority.

The author of Hebrews is unafraid to paint Moses as a faithful servant (3:2, 5), for indeed Moses can be accurately described as having lived a life that represented faithfulness to the Lord. Still, Moses was just a servant, and not worthy to receive the honor that a son, as the heir of his father, deserves as leader of the house. Jesus, on the other hand, is the faithful Son, the one who lived a life of utter faithfulness (v. 6; [1 Peter 2:22](#)). As the incarnate God Himself, Jesus directs the church and is worthy to receive worship from the church. Moses, on the other hand, is never more than a member of the church of God. John Calvin comments, "Moses was committed to a doctrine to which he, in common with others, was to submit; but Christ, though he put on the form of a servant, is yet Master and Lord, to whom all ought to be subject." Hence, Moses looked forward to the coming of the one who would surpass him in honor and glory ([John 5:46](#)).

Jews in the first century, who greatly esteemed Moses for the honor God gave him ([Num. 12:5–7](#)), found this teaching hard to accept. But Christ is indeed greater than Moses, the One who as the only begotten Son of God has done what Moses could not do and has purchased eternal salvation for His people.