

**HEBREWS – LEVITICUS**  
**“Jesus Superior to Moses”**  
**Hebrews 3:1-6**  
**April 23, 2023**

**Hebrews 3:1-6**

**Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, <sup>2</sup> who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) <sup>1</sup>**

**“This is the Word of God” – “Thanks be to God.”**

It is challenging for us today to understand how much the Hebrews of the first century, and even the devout Jews today, honor and revere Moses. There have been so many caricatures of the great leader and even respectful depictions of him in movies, art, and stories that often from our Gentile perspective...thousands and thousands of years removed from his story...that we struggle and actually find it impossible to fully grasp how the Jews of the first century thought of Moses.

**THE GREAT MOSES**

Moses was considered the greatest of all Hebrews. In fact, many considered him the greatest of all people to live. In Jewish life, King David is revered as the greatest of all kings of the people, but even he would fall numerous steps below Moses in a hierarchy of honor.

We looked at the third book of Moses last week when we opened Leviticus 1. We read how God called Moses and spoke directly to him.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Heb 3:1–6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

This man, though fully man and not divine, was called by God for a unique task.

The history of Moses and his life was told and retold to the Hebrew people for generations.

He was the **chosen** one of God, called to fulfill an epic task for God and for his people. He was rescued and preserved at birth when children were being killed by an evil king. He was called by God.

He was the **deliverer** of God's people through God's amazing display of power. The Nile River turned to blood. Plagues were infecting the land of Egypt. The slaves were released, and Moses delivered them from Egypt, across the Red Sea and on toward the land of promise.

He was the **prophet** of God – the mouthpiece of truth. The speaker of God's words. In the Old Testament often God would speak to his prophets through signs and wonders and indirect means, but to Moses, God spoke. He communicated directly.

### **Numbers 12:6-8**

**<sup>6</sup>And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. <sup>7</sup>Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup>With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”<sup>2</sup>**

This was the moment Moses received the Ten Commandments. This is the law of Moses the people read, studied, and sought to live by.

Moses was also the nation's **historian**. His writings under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit make up the first five books of the Old Testament and

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Nu 12:5–8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

give us the groundwork and history of God's redeeming work from the very beginning.

Moses was called **meek**. Meek does not mean weak. He was a man of solid character, a man of truth, a man in control...for the most part.<sup>3</sup>

### **Numbers 12:3**

**<sup>3</sup>Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.<sup>4</sup>**

That's Moses. Just a snapshot of him and as many of you know, there are many more things that could be said. There is much to study regarding the character of this man, the calling, and the leadership skill. Moses was the ultimate Hebrew. He was the prophet, the redeemer, the called out one, the deliverer, the chosen one of God.

History continues to remind us of the great influence of this man.

But there is ...

### **ONE GREATER THAN MOSES**

In previous passages, the writer of Hebrews points to the reality of spiritual beings called angels. There is no discounting their existence and their strength. Angels have particular roles and fulfill them for the glory of God. They are messengers. They are warriors. They are God's servants. They are not human, nor are they formerly human (movies and fiction give us that false narrative) but they are godly. Not God, but godly.

And as the writer waxed eloquently about the position and personhood of Jesus Christ, he was clear that Christ was over and above angels. Angels are subservient to Christ because Christ is not simply a man who

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<sup>3</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Nu 12:3). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

woke up one day at age thirty realizing he was more than man. Some do teach that. Christ is not simply the best man ever to live, though he is. He is not just a humanitarian, a religious leader, a crowd gatherer, or any other phrase or label attributed to him. Jesus Christ was, is, always has been, and always will be God. He is God the Son – second person of the Trinity. He is Son of God – only begotten by the Father because of his great love for the world. He is the Son of man – fully human and self-limiting for a season by his own desire and for the glory of the Father.

He is this and so much more. And...he is a bigger deal than the angels.

And as evidenced in this passage, he is bigger, better, more holy, more righteous, more important than the greatest Jew...the greatest human being as some would attest... ever. He is greater than Moses!

While this may not shake us in our pews today, it was shattering for many Hebrew believers hearing and reading this letter two thousand years ago.

Christ is more.

Christ is the ultimate.

No one compares to him...not even Moses!

Therefore, brothers... the author states...consider Jesus.

### **Hebrews 3:1-2**

**Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,<sup>2</sup> who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Heb 3:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The writer is not putting down Moses but clarifying the positions. There are positions. There is a hierarchy here. While even in Jesus's day, the disciples were scrambling to position themselves as more important or more loved in the gathering of the twelve (if not them, then certainly some of their mothers were) this positioning continued.

We love lists. It's human nature.

I know my heart and I know that I rank things. I know I put things on lists. I give scores (if not aloud, in my mind.) Restaurants get graded. TV shows are either really good or terrible (rarely somewhere in between.) People even get these unspoken ratings.

Do any of you remember back in ancient history when MySpace was a thing and the "Top 8" was a big deal? I'm talking to Millennials now. That rating created some interesting conversations (well, instant messages) between friends and soon to be former friends.

So don't you think that when the writer states Jesus's position over Moses here it rang loudly with the Hebrew Christians? Sure it did. They were called brothers by the writer, so they are believers in Christ. This is a connection to the previous chapter where it is declared that Jesus defeated and conquered death and sin. He thereby fulfilled his calling, his destiny, as the Son to rule the world as God's vice-regent.<sup>6</sup> Yet, these brothers were questioning, thinking on things, maybe even doubting. So, when the writer tells them Jesus is higher than angels they are shaken back to reality and truth. Maybe it's a "Wow! That's a huge deal. Yeah. I get that." But when the writer says, "He's higher than Moses too!" that likely was received with a "Whaaatt???" and a bit of shock.

Imagine for your entire life you have been taught that Moses was the ultimate Jew. The greatest of all time. You have been taught this and

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<sup>6</sup> Schriener, Thomas R. *Hebrews: Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 113.

have not been given permission to believe otherwise. Not only that, but your parents were taught this too. So were your grandparents, your extended family, your dead ancestors, and every other Jewish person in your friend-group and family. I mean this would not even be debated.

But then this letter comes and clearly states what you would not even think. This concept would not even cross your mind. But here it is in black-and-white. You're reading it and hearing it read aloud.

### **Hebrew 3:3**

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

### **THE GREAT BUILDER**

This is vital. Moses and Jesus were NOT on the same level. The readers of this letter were in danger of allowing their attraction to Moses and the revelation entrusted to him to be exalted more than Christ and his message.<sup>8</sup> Human nature elevates and idolizes. Celebrities come and go and crowds gather for a season. Ticket sales are up for a while. New events are scheduled and people go nuts over these things. This is not a new phenomena.

Moses was no celebrity, but he was highly revered. As is the danger that anyone who leaves such a lasting and vital legacy...especially when one does so for the good of people and the glory of God...there is a danger of too highly elevating a person. This is not Moses's fault.

Yet it happens. And here the positioning of authority is vital. Christ has been counted worthy of more glory than even Moses! Why? Because as the writer states, it is Christ who is akin to the builder of the house while Moses is a member of the household.

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<sup>7</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Heb 3:3). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>8</sup> Schriener, 115.

Creator vs. creation.

The builder of the house is the greater. Thus, our faith should be placed in the only one deserving of the honor.

Moses was a faithful precursor to Christ. He was a servant IN the house. A vital, needed, important, and faithful position. A high position. A position of authority and leadership in the house of God. A position of influence and inspiration for the family of God. This is Moses's role and legacy.

But Moses did not establish the people of God. He is not the originator of the family of God. He was a redeemer and rescuer, but not THE Redeemer and Rescuer. He was a deliverer, but not THE Deliverer. He was a prophet, but not THE Prophet. He was from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, but he was not THE Priest.

Numbers 12 reveals Moses' superiority of others as a distinctive and faithful servant of God. He "saw the Lord" but was not the Lord. When the Hebrews author calls Moses a servant, he is not demeaning him, but edifying him. This is an exalted title. Moses' superiority and greatness is not to be ignored. He is the standout prophet and greatest leader in all the Old Testament.

But...he is not the Lord. He is not the Christ. He is not the One, the Way, the Truth, the Life. He, like others, but in a very unique way, was a precursor and a preparer for the people of God for the Messiah. He was God's faithful servant, but he looked forward to when God would speak a better and final word through is Son.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Schriener, 118.

## Hebrews 3:5-6

**<sup>5</sup> Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, <sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>**

“If we hold fast” – a confusing statement, but not one that should cast doubt on our relationship with Christ. For the redeemed, for the saved, for the blood-bought children of God, our faith is secure in Christ. This introduces a major theme in this book and it is important today and for days to come.

Only those who persevere in faith will be saved, and that all who have genuine faith WILL persevere. Our works neither save us nor keep us saved.<sup>11</sup>

Yet we must hold strongly to our confidence in Christ and boast continually in the hope we have in Him. This is the Word of God.

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<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 3:5–6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>11</sup> Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *Exalting Jesus In Hebrews: Christ-Centered Exposition* (Nashville, TN: Holman, 2017), 46.