

Transfiguration / March 2, 2025

Hebrews 3:3

*“For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honour than the house itself.”*

Jesus is faithful as God’s Son

The letter to the Hebrews is about Jesus, His divinity, His humanity, His service as The Great High Priest to atone for our sin and the salvation we receive through Him. In the previous two chapters Jesus is compared to the prophets and the angels. The prophets were the voice of God among the people of Israel. A prophet may have sometimes spoken his or her opinion on the faith and lifestyle of the people. St. Paul occasionally offered his opinions distinct from the word of the Lord. In 1 Corinthians he wrote on a certain matter saying, *“But I give my judgement as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.”* But when a prophet said, *“Thus says the Lord,”* it was not the prophet speaking, but the Lord speaking through the prophet. How God spoke to the prophets is not clearly defined, sometimes by dreams and in visions. But it was the belief of the teachers of ancient Israel that when the Lord spoke directly to the prophets, it was through the voice of His angels. Paul speaks of the covenant of Mount Sinai being mediated through the ministry of angels. In times past God spoke through the prophets by the ministry of angels. The author Hebrews says, in these last days He has spoken to us directly through His Son.

In chapter three Jesus is compared to Moses. Moses was a special man as the human mediator of the covenant the Lord made with Israel at Mount Sinai. Moses represented God to the people of Israel, speaking His words, giving His laws, decrees and commands. When the Israelites had disputes, Moses would seek God’s counsel in the Tent of Meeting. The Lord would give His judgement and tell Moses what to do. Moses’ word was the last word, because it was the Lord’s word. Moses represented the people in the presence of God. When they sinned, he pleaded for their forgiveness. The Lord gave him the Law on tablets of stone, which he delivered to the people. The Law was given through Moses. God spoke with Moses more directly than to any of the prophets. It says in Deuteronomy the Lord spoke with Moses *“as a man speaks with his friend.”* Moses and the angels carried on a special work, each in their way prepared for the coming of Jesus. Jesus is the most special person and the greatest messenger from God. The author of Hebrews calls Him *“the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”* Jesus is worthy of more glory than

Moses, the prophets and the holy angels. They were and are faithful in God's house as servants. Jesus is faithful over God's house as His Son from eternity. He is the greatest representative of God, in the nature of His being, in His nature as love and in the nature of His service in God's house, the church. He is the great high priest, who sacrificed Himself for our salvation, taking away the sin of the world. He offers forgiveness and life for all to receive. He gives forgiveness and life to all who believe.

Moses' importance as a servant in the household of God is highlighted by his presence with Jesus in company with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. No greater honour could be bestowed on servants in God's Old Testament household than standing with Jesus when He revealed His glory to His disciples, Peter, James and John. Moses was faithful as a servant in service to God and the people of Israel for more than 40 years. First, he led them to the presence of God at Sinai. Then he brought them to the border of the Promised Land at the Jordan River. When the people turned from God in faithlessness, Moses faithfully led Israel for forty years in the wilderness. Moses was faithful, though his service was not perfect. He disrespected God in the presence of the people in the wilderness by expressing his anger. It was for this sin that he was denied entrance into the Promised Land. Moses was a sinful human being like all of us, but God considered him righteous for the sake of the grace of His forgiveness, which He would express fully in the forgiveness that is in Christ Jesus.

Moses was faithful as a servant in the Lord's household, but he remained a sinful human being. In zeal for his people, he murdered an Egyptian who was abusing a fellow Hebrew and hid his body in the sand. Like Noah he was righteous in comparison with his generation, though not in comparison with God. Like his generation he had his own sins, faults and failings. Like his generation, Moses died because of his sin. The wages of sin is death. Death comes to all, because all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant of the law, but like all servants of the law, he died. The law does not and cannot give life. The law brings death. The law shows us sin as the cause of death. The law, like Moses, leads us to the Promised Land, but it cannot bring us past the barrier of sin and death. The law shows our need for a Saviour to bring us through the barrier of sin and death and into the land of peace and rest. The law shows our need for Jesus. Jesus is the Saviour from sin and death. Jesus brings the household of God into the Promised Land.

Moses is remembered as the giver of the law, by which God governed His household, the people of ancient Israel. That was important, but the most important thing Moses did was prophesy the coming of Jesus, the great prophet the Lord would send after Moses' service in God's household had ended. In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses says to the people of Israel, "*The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers, it is to him you shall listen.*" Some think this was a reference to Joshua, whom the Lord later commissioned to succeed Moses. Yet not even Joshua considered himself to be this prophet. The children of Israel in succeeding centuries remembered the promise and looked for the Prophet's coming. Jesus is the prophet greater than Moses. Moses testified to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, so that we would see His divine glory and believe in Him as our God and Saviour. Moses was faithful as a servant in the household of God, the church. Jesus is faithful over the household of God as the Son of God. In service for the household of God, Jesus gave Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. Through the gospel He now offers all people His service as Saviour from sin and death. He calls us to believe and receive!

Jesus has greater glory than Moses, because unlike Moses who served in the household of God for a time, Jesus as God's Son, serves over the household of God for time and eternity. Jesus is the most special human being, God and man in one person. The author of Hebrews says, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.*" God spoke to the prophets through angels. God spoke to the people of old through prophets. God now speaks to us through Jesus. He has the words of eternal life. God made covenant with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai. Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant. He made a covenant of forgiveness between God and humans through the faithfulness of His life and the sacrifice of His death. God accepted His service, sealing His approval by raising Him from the dead. God offers forgiveness and life for all to receive through Jesus, by faith in His name and baptism into His death and resurrection.

Through Jesus, and by faith in His name, God brings us into His household, the church, which bears the name and marks of Christ. Through Jesus, by faith in His name and baptism into His death and resurrection, God makes our bodies His home, through His Spirit who dwells within us. Moses sealed the children of Israel in covenant with God by shedding the blood of bulls. Jesus seals us in covenant with God with His blood, shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. His blood of forgiveness is offered for all to receive, given to all who believe in Him as their God

and Saviour. Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant in time. Jesus is faithful over God's house eternally as His Son and as our Saviour. He is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. He gives us faith to believe!

Jesus died for the sins the law uncovers, but could never cover in forgiveness. Jesus died to atone for the sin that the law condemns. Jesus rose for the forgiveness and salvation of all who believe. He brings all baptized believers into His house, the church. Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house in ancient times. He gave the law that shows us our sin. Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses as the Saviour from sin. Moses died for his sin. Jesus died for Moses' sin, the world's sin, our sin. Moses as a servant of the law shows us our sin, so we see our need for the Saviour. Jesus is the Saviour.

May God show us our sin through the law and by His Spirit at work in the gospel, open our eyes to see Jesus and open our hearts to receive Him as our Saviour. In Jesus' Name. Amen