

Hebrews

Chapter 3:1-6

¹Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession: Jesus; ²He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.

Therefore > The previous two verses help to explain the reason behind the “Therefore” >
¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brothers so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

(Wuest) - By the use of the word “wherefore,” the writer draws a conclusion from the preceding argument. Having shown that Messiah is better than the prophets and the angels, he asks his readers to consider Him in relation to Moses.

Partakers > (Strong’s) sharing in

Holy brothers and sisters, partakers of a heavenly calling > With descriptives such as “holy”, “brothers”, “sisters”, “partakers of a heavenly calling” it would be hard to say these individuals are not saved. Therefore, we need to remove that option from the choices as we begin viewing the tough passages.

Consider > (Strong’s) to take note of, perceive

(HELPS) (from *katá*, "down along, exactly according to" and *noiéō*, "to think") – properly, to think from up to *down*, to a *conclusion*; to consider *exactly, attentively (decisively)*; to *concentrate* by fixing one's thinking

(Swindoll) In English, “consider” is a term used for pondering, thinking about, or reflecting upon. But the Greek word behind this English translation (*katanoēō*) means much more. It means “observe carefully” or “pay attention to”

Apostle > (Strong’s) a messenger, one sent on a mission, an apostle

(Robertson) This is the only time in the New Testament that Jesus is called an apostle

(Swindoll ... on “Apostle”) As Donald Guthrie points out, this notion fits well with Jesus’ own words in John 17:18 > “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

(Barclay) In a foreign land, the British ambassador's voice is the voice of Britain, and the American ambassador speaks with the voice of the United States. So, Jesus came with the voice of God; in him, God speaks.

High Priest > (Uteley) Hebrews is the only book of the Bible to call Jesus high priest (cf. Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14,15; 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26,28; 8:1,3;9:11; 10:21). It takes an extensive rabbinical argumentation to convince first century Jews that Jesus, from the tribe of Judah, really was a priest. The Dead Sea Scrolls community expected two Messiahs, one royal (tribe of Judah) and one priestly (tribe of Levi, cf. Psalm 110; Zechariah 3-4).

Confession > (Strong's) an agreement, confession

(HELPS) from *homou*, "the same, together" and *legō*, "speak to a conclusion, lay to rest" – properly, a *conclusion* embraced by *common confession* (*profession, affirmation*).

Appointed > (Strong's) to make, do

(Vincent) constituted

²He was faithful ... as Moses also was in all His house > Numbers 12:6-8 > ⁶He said, "Now hear My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, will make Myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. ⁷It is not this way for My servant Moses: He is faithful in all My household; ⁸With him I speak mouth to mouth, That is, openly, and not using mysterious language, and he beholds the form of the LORD. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?"

(Robertson) The author makes no depreciatory remarks about Moses as he did not about the prophets and the angels. He cheerfully admits that Moses was faithful "in all his house", an allusion to Numbers 12:7 about Moses.

(Vincent) The subject of the high-priesthood of Christ, introduced in this verse, is not carried out in detail by showing the superiority of Jesus to earthly high priests. This is reserved for chs. 5-7. Instead, the writer proceeds to show that Christ is superior to Moses, as he has already shown his superiority to angels ... The subject is a delicate one to treat for Jewish readers to whom Moses was the object of the deepest veneration; but the treatment displays tact by placing Moses in the foreground beside Christ as an example of fidelity to his commission.

(Wuest) The writer displays great tact by showing that both Messiah and Moses were faithful, before showing that while Moses was faithful as a servant, Messiah was faithful as the Son.

House > (Weirsbe) The word house is used six times in these verses. It refers to the people of God, not to a material building. Moses ministered to Israel, the people of God under the old covenant. Today, Christ ministers to His church, the people of God under the new covenant ("whose house are we," Heb. 3:6). You find an illustration of this dual use of "house" in **II Samuel 7**. David wanted to build a temple for God, a house in which God could dwell. But God told David that He would build David's house (household, family) and make a covenant with David's descendants.

II Samuel 7:16 > ¹⁶ *Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.*

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.*

Counted worthy > (HELPS) to reckon as worthy, matching value to actual substance – i.e. worth as it corresponds to reality. In the papyri (the word) can refer to making a "claim": "claiming to recover what I had made over to her"

(Vincent) Used both of reward which is due (**1 Timothy 5:17**) and of punishment (**Hebrews 10:29**).

1 Timothy 5:17 > ¹⁷ *The elders who lead well are to be **considered worthy** of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

Hebrews 10:29 > ²⁹ *How much more severe punishment do you think he will **deserve** who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

The builder of the house has more honor than the house > (Constable) We can see the difference between Jesus Christ's superiority and Moses', by comparing the builder of a building (founder of a family) with the building (family) itself. No matter how grand a building may be, its creator (architect) always gets "more glory" than the building itself. Whereas Moses served faithfully within Israel, Jesus Christ created Israel. Moses served faithfully in the Israelite system of worship, but Jesus Christ designed that system of worship.

Built > (Wuest Translation) *for every house is built and completely furnished by someone*

(Precept Austin) means to prepare, make ready, put in a state of readiness. It is used of persons who are mentally and spiritually prepared - "make ready a people prepared for the Lord.". To build, construct, erect, create. To furnish or equip. This verb expresses more than mere construction of the house. It includes the supply of all necessary furniture and equipment. It's the idea of adorning and equipping with all things necessary.

⁵ **Now** *Moses was faithful in all God's 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 firmly** to our confidence and the boast of our hope.*

Now > In the Greek the word is *kai* which is often translated as *and*. (Wuest states) "The word "and" introduces the further development of the thought of Heb 3:2, 3, namely, the fidelity of the Messiah and Moses, and the corresponding honor. The writer says that Moses was faithful as a servant.

Servant > (HELPS) an attendant (minister) giving "*willing service*" (S. Zodhiates, Dict). *therápōn* refers to a faithful attendant who *voluntarily* serves another, like a friend serving in a tender, noble way.

(Precept Austin) denotes a faithful friend to a superior, who solicitously regards the superior's interest or looks after his affairs, not a common or domestic servant. (The Greek word) is one who serves willingly regardless of whether he is a free man impelled by love or a slave bound by duty.

(Weirsbe) The Greek word translated "*servant*" 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.

(Robertson) Old word, in LXX, only here in N.T. and quoted from **Numbers 12:7**.

Numbers 12:7 > ⁷ *It is not this way for My servant Moses: He is faithful in all My household*

Son > (Uteley) Jesus a son (there is no article) is contrasted with Moses, the servant. Moses was a faithful servant (cf. Num. 12:7), but Jesus was a family member!

Over His house > (Constable) The writer was thinking of priestly functions, as is clear from the context. His concern was that his readers might not remain faithful to God. This would result in their losing their privilege as priests, which included intimate fellowship with God, and the opportunity to represent God before people and people before God.

This priesthood is what the Israelites (as a whole) lost, when they turned away from the Lord and built the golden calf at Mt. Sinai (Exod. 32). Instead of all the Israelites being priests (**Exod. 19:6**),

Exod. 19:6 > ⁶ *and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”*

God limited this privilege to the Levites, who remained faithful when the other Israelites apostatized (Exod. 32:26-29; cf. **Num. 3:5-13**).

Num. 3:5-13 > ⁵ *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,* ⁶ *“Bring the tribe of Levi forward and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. ⁷ They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation in front of the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. ⁸ They shall also take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. ⁹ So you shall assign the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are exclusively assigned to him from the sons of Israel. ¹⁰ So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death.”*¹² *“Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the firstborn of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. 13 For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I fatally struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from the human firstborn to animals. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord.”*

If > (Strong’s) *ean* > Conditional Particle or Conjunction

(Utlley) This is a (Greek grammar) which means potential action. This gives the statement an element of contingency

Hold firmly > (Strong’s) *katecho* > to hold fast, hold back. Usage > (a) I hold fast, bind, arrest, (b) I take possession of, lay hold of, (c) I hold back, detain, restrain, (d) I hold a ship, keep its head.

(Precept Austin) *katecho* gives a beautiful picture from its secular usage where as a nautical term *katecho* means to steer toward or land at.

Luke uses *katecho* with this meaning in Acts writing that "*casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for (katecho) the beach.*" (**Acts 27:40**) They were "holding their course toward beach"

Positions Taken by Some of the Commentators

Swindoll > Paul addresses the individuals as being saved ... but their actions might indicate some were not saved

Weirsbe > "Rather, the writer was affirming that those who hold fast their confidence and hope are proving that they are truly born again." ... "We are not saved by holding to our confession. The fact that we hold to our confession is proof that we are God's true children."

MacArthur > "It means rather that perseverance in faithfulness is proof of real faith."

Zane > The author feels the solution is that those who fall away lose their positions within the ministry - "Should any of his readers do this, they would forfeit their roles in the Son's priestly house, which is only maintained by holding firmly to their Christian profession

Pink > "The Hebrews were ever in danger of subordinating the future to the present, and of forsaking the invisible (Christ in heaven) for the visible (Judaism on earth), of giving up a profession which involved them in fierce persecution. Hence their need of being reminded that the proof of their belonging to the house of Christ was that they remained steadfast to Him to the end of their pilgrimage."

(Constable) The proofs of the Messiah's superiority over Moses:

1. Moses was an apostle. Christ was the Apostle (v. 1).
2. Moses was the member of a house (family). Christ was the builder of a house (v. 3).
3. Moses was connected with one house. Christ built all things (v. 4).
4. Moses was a man. Christ was God (v. 4).
5. Moses was a servant in a house. Christ was a Son over a house (v. 5).
6. Moses was a testimony of things to be spoken later. Christ was the substance and fulfillment of what Moses witnessed to (v. 5).
7. Moses served in God's house. Christ was Son over His own house (v. 6).