

Greater Than Moses

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[0:00] Well, as you've taken in these first few messages that Pastor Mike has delivered us from the letter to the Hebrews, you've probably seen that the author was methodically making the argument that Jesus is better.

Better than everything. He's better than the angels. He's better than Moses. He's better than Joshua. He's better than Aaron in the Old Testament priesthood. Jesus is better than the Old Covenant.

He's better than the sacrifices and on and on. Jesus brings his people a better hope. He brings them a better sacrifice. He brings them a better substance, a better country, a better resurrection, a better everything.

He is preeminent over everything. Jesus is better. However, the pattern of this letter seems to go something like this. The author begins by declaring Jesus is better, but then the objection comes. What about this? And so the author answers the objection, providing an argument that Jesus is better than the challenge. And then often after the challenge is made, after the argument is made, proving that Jesus is better, then the author actually then provides a warning.

[1:23] And that warning calls professing believers not to drift from the Word, not to doubt the Word, not to become dull toward the Word, not to begin to despise the Word, and certainly not ultimately to defy the Word.

So that's how this whole thing goes. Jesus is better, argument, what about this? And then comes the explanation, and then the warning.

Now today, the question, as you gather, is what about Moses? I think we have a tendency to hold certain people in high esteem.

It could be a statesman. It could be an author. It could be a humanitarian. It could be a teacher. It could be a theologian. For a Jew, the person who was held high above all others was probably Moses, with the possible exception of Abraham.

I mean, the Jews identified with Abraham in their heritage. I think it was in John 8 where it was said, we are offspring of Abraham, and Abraham is our father.

[2:29] But according to Jesus, they had set their hope on Moses. John 5, verse 45. And the Pharisees even identified themselves as disciples of Moses, according to John 9.

Before we actually consider Moses and how Jesus is better than Moses, notice the first word in the text. And by the way, the text is on the back side of your bulletin, so you can follow along there. But in the first part of that, what's the first word? Therefore. The author of Hebrews pulls in the argument that was stated in chapter 2, verses 10 to 18, regarding why Jesus came in the flesh and what he accomplished for us.

The author of Hebrews had argued that Jesus was a merciful and faithful high priest, who had tasted death for everyone and is the sole source of our salvation. But many were thinking, okay, but what's the question?

What about Moses? Could anyone else be greater than Moses? Well, let's consider Moses for a moment. God miraculously protected Moses at birth.

[3:39] You know the story from the early chapter of Exodus, how God protected Moses from being killed. Amazing story. And then, how about the death of Moses? That was marked by provision for his burial by God himself.

That was unique. And then the life between his birth and his death was marked by all kinds of miracles. He was a divinely chosen instrument of God for the task of delivering God's people from Egyptian slavery, which would actually serve as a picture, if you will, of our deliverance from our sin. Amazing picture of our salvation. It was to Moses that God with his fiery finger wrote in the tablets of stone the law.

People were introduced to the glory of God from a distance. What about Moses? Oh, he was introduced to God practically face to face. In fact, Moses' skin actually reflected the glory of God. Moses was an amazing person. From his pen came the plans for the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, not to mention the entire book of the law.

[4:54] The first five books of the Old Testament often referred to as the books of Moses. So, you can understand why the Jews held Moses in such high regard.

In the minds of the Jews, was there anyone greater? In fact, many Jews believed that Moses was even greater than the angels. Beyond what has already been said, God had spoken to Moses directly.

Remember at one point on the backside of the Midian Desert, Moses is watching sheep by himself and he sees a bush burning. And remember what happened? The bush spoke.

Well, not really. God did. From the bush. God spoke from the mountain. God spoke from the heavens. As one writer declared, Moses was the, quote, incomparable deliverer, the unparalleled prophet, the sole lawgiver, and the great historian.

Certainly, this was the man. This was God's man. So, the challenge of the author of Hebrews was to demonstrate that as important as Moses was, and as great and appropriately honored as Moses was, Jesus was better.

[6:09] Jesus is far greater. The challenge was not just, not really to take anything away from Moses, but to demonstrate the absolute superiority of Jesus.

So, keep in mind what's at stake. You've been around here for a while. Know that Christ the King Church has a motto. Three words. What is it? Together, following Jesus.

All right. Why should I follow Jesus? By the way, that was a little weak. But, together, following Jesus. Why should I follow Jesus? I mean, why not fall back on somebody else?

Like Moses. Isn't that good enough? Might be safer. But, the author of Hebrews would shout, No! No, never! Never let that be.

A greater than Moses is here. Therefore, he says, consider Jesus. I think the NIV translates that, Fix your thoughts on Jesus. Focus on Jesus.

[7:08] So, this morning, by comparing and contrasting Jesus with Moses, we're going to do what the author of Hebrews commanded us to do. We're going to consider Jesus. We're going to fix our thoughts on Him.

Before we look at that exactly, first we're going to consider the readers for a moment. The author of Hebrews addresses them as holy brothers, and as those who, quote, share in the heavenly calling. So, I take it that these were assumed to be true believers. They were not just fellow Jews. They were true believers. Again, holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling.

The author's not speaking to them in terms of ethnicity, exactly, but rather spiritually. He's looking at them as believers in Jesus. So, we're reminded of this special relationship that we have in chapter 2.

Mike brought that out last time. The author is going to support his argument that Jesus is better than Moses, and he's going to use three lessons to do that. The first one is a lesson in character, and the character quality he's going to look at is faithfulness.

[8:21] Here's the text, verses 1 and 2. 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.

So, we're going to look, first of all, at faithfulness to the Father, and see Moses as faithful to the Father, and then see Jesus as faithful to the Father. Before the author of Hebrews demonstrates the superiority of Christ, he's going to speak of the similarity in faithfulness to the Father by both Moses and Jesus.

This was done to, I think, recognize the strong affection and the significance, the significant connection of Moses to the Jews and almost everything else Jewish to Moses.

So, both Moses and Jesus were faithful to the one who had called them. At one point, God was speaking to Aaron and Miriam, and as he was speaking to them, he was, it was almost like Miriam and Aaron were having a family coup against Moses.

In fact, they were about ready to take over. And in Numbers chapter 12, God speaks to those two, and he says about the prophets in the past and so forth, and how God used prophets, but not with Moses.

[9:54] Not so with my servant Moses, says God. He is faithful in all my house. 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? So, he makes the case about the significance of Moses there. Moses carried out God's plan, mostly in God's way.

He was used by God to deliver the people out of 400 plus year slavery or bondage in Egypt. He was a faithful person to lead them, to secure provisions for them, with what would ultimately become a 40 year journey.

Moses was faithful. Obviously, Jesus was faithful to the Father. Jesus was the one who was called by him to come and redeem his people from their sins.

He led his people out of bondage, the bondage of sin. Jesus was also the good shepherd who led and fed his people and protected and defended his own, and with the promise of bringing them all the way back to the land, if you were, to the Father's house.

[11:06] Faithfulness to the Father is found in both Jesus and Moses. But it was not just faithfulness to the Father, but also faithfulness to the mission.

Jesus is mentioned by a couple of terms in those first two verses. One is rather strange. In fact, I think it's the only place where Jesus is called the apostle.

Apostle. What's the term apostle mean? It means one who is sent. It's without argument that Jesus was sent here by the Father in order that the work of redemption might be accomplished.

He was clearly God's highest messenger to men. In the truest sense of the word, Jesus was an apostle. Of course, he not only represented God, he is God.

Nonetheless, he is considered an apostle. Now, though Moses is not called an apostle in Scripture, he was clearly sent by God on a mission, and he was faithful to accomplish that mission.

[12:08] He failed several times along the way. You recall the time when Moses was to speak to the rock? Remember what he did? The second time, he struck the rock, caused him some problems.

He complained to God on many occasions. I remember hearing a phrase by a preacher one time that caught my attention, and I think Moses must have said this or similarly.

Lord, what is wrong with these people? Seriously? In fact, at one point, Moses came to the place where he said, just take my life. I'm done. I'm done.

I mean, how would you respond to two and a half million complaining people every day? But generally, Moses was faithful as one sent by God to accomplish this God-assigned mission.

Jesus, on the other hand, was more than an apostle, more than a sent one. He was also a high priest of our confession. This could not be said of Moses.

[13:11] Moses was a prophet, and on occasion, Moses served as a priest, according to Psalm 99, verse 6, but never as a high priest. In fact, the title belonged to his brother Aaron.

Clearly, at this point, Jesus is proven to be superior to Moses. As apostle, Jesus represents God to men. As the high priest, he represents men to God.

And we're introduced to this position in chapter 2, and we will likely see that many more times as Pastor Mike walks us through this book. Jesus is not only a priest, but he is our great high priest.

And that argument will be coming in chapters to follow. But the point is that both Jesus and Moses were faithful to the Father, and they were faithful to their mission.

And there's only just a brief mention of Christ's superiority to Moses at this point. But the author of Hebrews is about to make the superiority argument much stronger.

[14:15] So now we look at a lesson in comparison. And the comparison is a builder and a building. And this is verses 3 and 4. Here's the text.

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. So basically, we are comparing the work of Jesus and the work of Moses.

The building or house was not a physical structure, but it is a people. So Moses' house or household included Old Testament believers, Jews in particular, but there were others who joined the Jews as proselytes.

And so there was this group of people that Moses, that was included in, quote unquote, Moses' household. Moses was a faithful manager of that household. Moses was responsible for dispensing to the Israelites the commandments, the truths, the requirements, the promises that God had committed to his trust.

[15:28] Moses was in the house. Moses managed the house. But Moses didn't own the house. And Moses didn't build the house. The house belonged to God.

Moses was important, but Jesus is better. So let's look at Jesus' house or household. That includes believers, his church. Again, verse 3, what's it say?

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as much more glory as the builder of the house has more honor than the house itself. So Christ was also faithful in his household.

In fact, the apostle Paul would write about that in Ephesians chapter 3 or chapter 2 when he said, so then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household.

That's speaking of believers. Us. Peter echoed the same idea when he wrote in his first letter in chapter 2, in coming to him as to a living stone rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God.

[16:34] You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house. So unlike Moses, Jesus was the owner and the builder of the house.

And the author of Hebrews makes that point that the owner and the builder is greater than the building. So Moses was part of the house. Jesus made the house. In order for this to make any sense at all, for Jesus to make the house, what did he have to be?

He had to be God. And so, the author is zeroing in on the greatness of Jesus far greater than Moses.

Way more glory than Moses. Now we get to the climax of the argument, and that's a lesson in contrast. And so we're moving from a building and the builder now to a servant and a son.

So Moses is a servant. Jesus is the son. Here's the text. Now Moses was faithful. And by the way, just look at that. Remember we talked about the character quality first, faithfulness?

[17:40] And then we talked about the builder and the house. And now we're going to talk about servant and son contrast. Listen to this verse. Now Moses was faithful 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. There they all are. And we are his house.

We are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Let's look at Moses the servant.

The author of Hebrews puts the best possible spin on this. The word for servant here, I think this is the only time this particular term occurs in the New Testament.

It's a term for servant but it's not the kind of servant who is on the bottom row doing all the hard work. It's like the servant who's over the servants.

[18:45] It's like a high level servant. It's like the chief servant of the servants. Carries the idea of willingness to serve and personal service freely rendered.

So the author of Hebrews puts the best possible spin on this is Moses as a servant even as a high ranking servant however. Serving because he wanted to he's still a servant.

He was faithful he was obedient he was a good steward of God but he's still a servant. Moses' task mentioned here was to testify to the things that were to be spoken later.

What does that mean? Well in Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 15 I think Moses did this when he told the children of Israel these words the Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from among you from your brothers it is to him you shall listen.

Moses was talking about Jesus the son. See Judaism didn't understand then and it does not understand now that Moses was to be the witness to bear witness to the one who would come namely Jesus.

[20:08] Judaism without Christ is incomplete it's a shadow it's not the substance it's the advertisement but it's not the real thing. In fact Jesus would say it this way actually this is the this would be the writer of Hebrews the author of Hebrews would say it this way for since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities it can never by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

Moses was faithful to testify what would be said and done in the future and in fact Jesus would bear witness to that when he said for if you believed Moses you would believe me you know why because he wrote of me Moses was testifying to the things that were to be spoken later Moses did that as a servant but now we have Jesus the son Jesus made the point in John 8 35 the slave does not remain in the house forever but the son remains forever servants come and go the son remains the son forever Jesus as the son possesses the authority that is inherently superior to any mere servant Jesus is not in the house as is Moses he is over the house he is lord and master of the house and he's builder of the house that's

Jesus he's better than Moses and that's the whole argument here Jesus is better he's better than everything you think Moses is great look at Jesus he's better that's what he's saying now as Jesus is lord over all that this servant Moses has been displaced by the son Jesus you see it's it was not Moses who did this for the people it was Jesus we need to consider Jesus that's what we're called to in this text consider does not mean just give passing glance to it to consider means to think carefully to understand fully who Jesus is to think about him to ruminate on him are we doing that that's what he's calling us to do I want you to see this last phrase in verse six back up look at the text again in verse six he says and we are his household start with verse six but

Christ is faithful over God's house as a son and we are his household if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope if we hold fast now pastor Mike explained what that means that doesn't mean that we are hanging on for dear life okay now we hold fast because of who Jesus is that's true and that is the declaration really that we belong to Jesus those who belong to Jesus hold on those who belong to Jesus hold fast it's not a condition of our salvation it is the result of it true believers hold fast to Jesus we don't jettison him for something else we hold fast that's the point those who abandon Christ in favor of Judaism or anything else would prove that they had never been new creations!

in Christ ever but for us who know Christ for us who are known by him we have the courage God has given us to continue even in the midst of great trials!

[24:10] that courage emerges from our hope this hope in Christ Jesus looks ahead to the consummation of our salvation and the promises of scripture becoming fully realized in the believer's experience it's gonna happen he's controlling it all and so we are able to hold fast that's the point all right problem some of us are struggling feels like we can't hold on any longer you ever felt that way before I'm losing my grip how many times did Moses lose his grip but you know what there's a greater than Moses here and while we're struggling to hang on all the while the Lord is holding on to us if you belong to Jesus he's got you

Moses wrote this he had an idea about this this comes from Deuteronomy these are the words Moses wrote down the eternal God is your dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms what an incredible picture we're to hold fast but even when we think we can't hold on any longer we're going to because we're not going to fall because he told his disciples this my sheep hear my voice I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no he's greater than Moses he won't let you fall hold fast because you can because you will because he's holding on to you there's a there's a hymn that we've sometimes sung here that

I think just kind of summarizes this I'm going to leave that with you today just kind of take this in when I fear my faith will fail Christ will hold me fast when the tempter shall prevail he will hold me fast I can never keep my hold through life's fearful path for my love is often cold he must hold me fast those he saves are his delight Christ will hold me fast precious in his holy sight he will hold me fast he'll not let my soul be lost his promises shall last bought by him at such a cost he will hold me fast for my life he bled and died Christ will hold me fast justice has been satisfied he will hold me fast raised with him to endless life he will hold me fast till our faith is turned to sight when he comes at last he will hold me fast he will hold me fast for my savior loves me so he will hold me fast consider Jesus hold on to him he's better than anything and everything and when you belong to him he's holding fast to you and he will not let go is that good news he's better he's better than Moses so when the argument comes but what about no he's better but wait what no he's better but what he's better hold fast he's better let's pray father we're a bunch of people that need help we need help to remember who your son is we need help to consider you we need help to remember that we have been saved by a

God who's going to keep us we've been saved by a God who sent his son who is not just better but perfect great awesome a God who is all we need and we thank you for Jesus help us never ever ever to think there might be something better something more help us to trust in you to believe in you to depend on you to rest in you to hope in you to live for you until we're in your presence and see you face to face thank you that you hold on to us as we hold fast to you we thank you and praise you in the son the Lord Jesus name amen