

## HEBREWS

Message 17

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Reading: Hebrews 3:1-7

INTRO: We are beginning to look at the longest section in Hebrews that deals with Jesus Christ being superior to the Jewish High Priest. We looked at the OT passage where Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle. On a recent Wednesday prayer meeting, we saw the difference between the tabernacle and the temple. The tabernacle was the movable building Israel took with them through the wilderness. When Israel was settled in Canaan, Solomon built the temple and it had the same to rooms the tabernacle had and the utensils, but there were numerous additional buildings around the temple.

Now let me tell you something else about this tabernacle. When the tribulation time has passed, and then when the millennium has passed, and the new heavens and new earth come into place, there will be no temple or tabernacle in that New Jerusalem where God will dwell with man. Why not? There will be no more sin and no more need for it. Read the last chapters of Revelation and you will find it as I have said.

So, look at Hebrews 3:1 once more:

*1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

Now note the words, "Christ Jesus." The writer does not say, "Jesus Christ." The stress is first on the fact that our High Priest is the anointed One of God. That means He is the Messiah. As I understand it, He was anointed when He was baptized and the Holy Spirit of God came down on Him. Matthew 3:13-15 says this:

*13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.*

*14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"*

*15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.*

16 *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.*

17 *And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Jesus is the anointed One of God. That is what the name *Messiah* means. He is the confession of every true Christian. Then He is Jesus, the Saviour of man.

## II. JESUS CHRIST: THE HOPE SUPERIOR TO THE HIGH PRIEST

### A. Christ Our High Priest (3:1-4:16)

#### 1. The doctrine - Christ superior to Moses

##### a. The command to consider our High Priest con't (1-2)

In the last message we looked at verse 1. We'll go on to verse 2 and begin by reading both verses:

*1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

Hebrews 3:2 then goes on like this:

*2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.*

Moses is one of Judaism's most highly, if not the most highly regarded men of the past. The writer now points out to these Hebrew Christians that as Moses was faithful to God Almighty, so Jesus Christ was. The word "appointed" is a word meaning to *do* or *make*. From the context it seems the idea is God made Him high priest. Just as Moses was faithful in all of God's house so also was Christ Jesus faithful as our High Priest.

Note the pronoun "his" before the word house is capitalized. If that is correct, and I think it is, this house refers to God's house, which was

the tabernacle. The writer compares the faithfulness of Christ Jesus to the faithfulness of Moses.

A number of commentaries mentioned fidelity in connection with faithfulness. Fidelity has to do with faithfulness to one's wife or boss or parents etc... In the NT the word for faith is *pistis*. The word to believe is *pisteo*. The word for faithfulness is *pistos*. So, they all have the same root. When one believes something, one is persuaded it is true, so one believes it. When one is faithful, one practices what one is persuaded is true and right.

We all need to examine ourselves with regard to our faithfulness. Are we faithful to the Lord, our boss, or husband, our wife, our parents, our commitments? We know the dark valleys Moses went through but he remained faithful. Jesus Christ was faithful to the death. They were persuaded of the truth of what they stood for.

Now, if these Jews were thinking of going back to Judaism, they needed to consider that Christ became our High Priest and He was faithful, just as Moses was faithful. In faithfulness they were the same, but there was something that was not the same.

- b. The reason to consider our High Priest (3-6)
  - 1) The comparison of worthiness (3-4)

With that, the writer will now give further reason why these Hebrews should consider the Apostle and High Priest of their confession, Christ Jesus. If they put so much stock in Moses, they ought to put more stock in Jesus Christ. So, verse 3 says:

*3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.*

This One, that is Christ Jesus, has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. The Hebrews were thinking of leaving Christ and going back to Judaism. They still had huge respect for Moses, and rightly so. But what they did not get is that Jesus should receive more respect than Moses for He was worthy of more glory than Moses.

The writer now illustrates that truth in this way: The one who builds the house has more honor than the house! Just so, the Lord is worthy of more glory than Moses. Moses was faithful in God's house, but the Lord built the house.

The word translated *honor* speaks of valuing. How much more value does the builder have than the house? Here is how much: No builder, no house! No Lord, no Moses! The painter has more honor than the painting. He created it. No painter, no painting.

What does all this mean? If it was not for Christ, Moses would not have existed nor would he have had a house in which to work. What should that say to these Hebrews who were looking back to Moses? Why would they leave the Builder to go back to the building? No builder, no house!

So, what is more worthy of honor, the house or the builder? The builder, of course.

Verse 4:

*4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*

Before we look at this verse let me mention that this is a verse for the atheist. "Every house is built by someone." What could be more objectively true than that? So, every star is made by someone. The universe and all in it, is made by someone. So, who is that someone? It is not

reasonable that the universe came into being on its own. So, since man could not have made the universe, because it is too much for him, then someone greater than man must have done it. That One that is greater than man then must be God. That is as logical as  $2+2=4$ .

Now I would have thought that from the context it would say, "...but He who built all things is Christ Jesus." But it says, instead, that it was God. But what we have learned many times is that God made all things through Jesus Christ. So, the apostle John says that without Christ Jesus nothing was made that was made.

So, in comparison to worthiness of honor, the tabernacle over which Moses was responsible, is not worthy of honor in comparison to the One who made it.

We might apply this to the Bible. When Pastor Daryl stressed the value of the Word of God, he said we do not worship the book. That is bibliolatry. We worship the One who gave the book. No giver, no book. But it is the book through which we get to know the writer.

## 2) The comparison of faithfulness (5)

So, Jesus Christ is worthy of much more glory than Moses, just as the builder of the house over which Moses was is worthy of more honor than the building.

But consider now the comparison of faithfulness between Moses and Christ in verses 5-6:

*5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,*

*6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

Note again in verse 5 that the pronoun "His" in the NKJV is capitalized. That means this was not Moses' house but God's house that he was faithful in.

Note further that Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant. The word for *servant* here has the idea of an attendant. He simply did that which he was instructed to do. He had not made the house nor owned it. He served in it. But in this service, he was faithful.

But note now in particular that he was a servant for a testimony of those things which would be spoken of afterward. The word, "afterward" is not in the original but because it is something that would be spoken of in the future, it is necessary to add this word.

Moses' service in God's house was not the finished product. That was coming afterward. All the sacrifices of the OT did not complete anything. They spoke of something coming afterward. And that which came afterward was Christ Jesus, our Apostle and High Priest. What the writer is saying, "Now that we have come to the finished product, why would you go back to the former things?"

Now note in verse 6 the comparison of Christ:

*6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

Note first that verse 6 says, "...but Christ as a Son over His own house." There are a

few elliptical words that must be added from verse 5 and then it would say this: "...but Christ as a Son was *faithful* over His own house." As Moses was faithful over His house, so Christ was faithful over His house.

Christ was not a servant of someone else's house like Moses was; He was the Son over His own house. The house Moses served was not his own. The house Christ serves is His own. I wonder, could you tell me which house is Christ's own house? There is no temple in Israel today. Where or what is Christ's house?

Well, note that it tells us what house the Lord is talking about. It says, "We are His house if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." We are His house. What does that mean?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 3:16. It says:

*16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

*17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

We must spend some time here. Notice that it says, "You" and it is plural in the original, meaning believers, are the temple, the *naos* of God. Who remembers from our recent studies at prayer meeting what the *naos* is? What is it? The building with the holy place and the most holy place. But we are not a material building. We are a spiritual temple. This is what the OT tabernacle pictured.

There is very much to be learned from the OT tabernacle. You can get rid of all modern psychology and learn the nature of man from this building. Then one can learn

how sinful man can be reconciled to God and how man became the dwelling place of God after Christ's death, burial and resurrection. And here we learn that believers are the house that God and Jesus Christ live in.

Now go to 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. It says:

*14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

*15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

*16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

*17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."*

Do you remember that God dwelt, that is, He lived in the Most Holy place in the OT tabernacle and temple? When this letter was written to the Hebrews the Jewish temple was still in use. The Hebrews were thinking of going back to their old way of worship. But God was not in that temple.

Let us say you had built a temporary house. You would use that until the permanent house was completed. Then when the permanent house was ready you moved into it and after a while you began to wish you lived in the old house again. You were thinking of moving back. That is what these Hebrew Christians were considering.

When God's old house had fulfilled its purpose, He moved into the new one and



believers are that new temple. Well, verse 16 told us that believers were now the temple of God. His new residence is in every truly born-again believer. Note this verse says God will dwell in them, that is believers. Where did God say that?

Listen to these passages:

*Exodus 29:45 "I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.*

*Leviticus 26:12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.*

And thus, we are His people and He is our God. When it says God will dwell in them, it means He makes His home in believers. I find no English word to precisely explain this word to *dwell* but we have one in Low German. It is the word "huziarren." Literally in English we would say God is *housing* in us.

Let me make an aside note here for our young people. Out of this passage we get instruction that helps us in choosing a life partner. We are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Here is my advice; do not date a non-believer. We are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers and that includes business partners or marriage partners.

Let me make one more aside note. It says the believer is to come out from among certain kinds of people. What this teaches is the separation of believers from unbelievers. It does not mean we have nothing to do with them. We live among them, but we do not associate together as if we are in agreement in life. There is a Biblical doctrine of separation. It is hardly recognized in the modern church but Bible teaches it should be practiced.

With regard to our subject, turn to one more Scripture in 2 Peter 2. We'll read verses 4-5:

*4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,*

*5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

In Bible times a building had a chief cornerstone. And this passage says that Jesus Christ pictures that stone. Then it had all the other stones that make up the building and that pictures the true believers. This is the house Jesus is referring to.

Now, God does not want to live in a building of wood and stones. He wants to live in man. And how do we allow Him to dwell in us? There are two things we must do: 1 we must repent of our sins. We are lost and going to hell because of sin. If we want to become a place for God to live, we must first repent of our sins. Second, we must trust Christ by faith, and that faith is a life-time commitment.

And then, when we have truly become Christians, we become His dwelling place. So A.W. Tozer has written a book called, "Man, the Dwelling Place of God."

On this subject, let me take you to an important passage in the OT. It is Isaiah 66:1-2. It says this:

*1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"*

We, as people, like to have a place of rest. And our place of rest is usually home. When we have been gone away from home for a while or when we get sick, we just want to be at home. We want a place where we are at home. Here we can rest. And God says, "Where is the house you will build Me?" And second, "Where is the place of My rest?" Where can I be at home?

Look at what He says, "Heaven is My throne." Then He says, "The earth is My footstool." Then He says, "And where is the place of My rest?"

JFB says of the intent of verse 1, "What is this house you are building" and then, "what place is this for My rest?" In other words, "How can I rest in this house?" That is the Jewish temple. Why could God not rest in His own house?

Israel was once again in a backslidden state. Oh, they went to the temple. They did all their sacrifices. But what did all their religiosity do for God? Well, look at verse 3 for the answer:

*3 "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,"*

So, God says: "What is this house you are building" and then, "what place is this for My rest?" How could God rest in the temple when they had defiled it? The Jews delighted in their abominations; how could God delight in them? How could He dwell there?

Do you know what it is like when you have no place you can call home? You just want a

place of rest, a home, but you have no place like that. God is saying, "I want a place I can rest." But now look at Isaiah 66:2. It is a phenomenal verse. It says:

*2 For all those things My hand has made,  
And all those things exist," Says the LORD.  
"But on this one will I look: On him who is  
poor and of a contrite spirit, And who  
trembles at My word.*

When God could not rest in the temple because of the abominations of the majority of the Jews, He found a resting place in the few remaining godly people. There has always been a godly remnant. There have always been a few.

Where did God find His rest? Not at the temple. He found it in those who were poor, that is poor in spirit or humble, and of a contrite heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." May I ask each one of us, do we see ourselves as better than others? Or are we poor in spirit? How do we view others. Philippians 2 says we are to have the mind of Christ and that means to esteem others more important than ourselves. Well, it is in these poor in spirit that God finds His resting place.

These are those who are contrite of spirit. Of the word "contrite" the online bible says it means to be stricken or smitten. Let us take a moment to see if we are a place God can rest in. Are we poor and stricken and smitten in spirit?

Then note further the person in whom God can rest. It is one who trembles at His Word. Do I tremble at the Word of God? It is this kind of person where God finds a place to rest. Do I have a healthy fear of God? Or do I dabble in sin?

Listen to John 14:23 for one last verse:

23 *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

So, he has told the believer that he is God's house. Christ is the Son over His own house and true believers are that house. If we are truly born-again, Jesus Christ and God the Father both come and make their home in us. If you will ponder that you will see how phenomenal it is. God and Jesus Christ have come to live in me!

We go back now to Hebrews 3:6. Note that it has an "if" clause. Let me read verse 6 again:

*6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

Now, it is only true that we are Christ's house if... And the question is, it is only true if what? We are only the dwelling place of the Lord "...if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." What is clearly implied is that if we do not hold fast to this confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end, then we are no longer God's house.

Now why would the writer include this if clause? It is because that is what this book is all about. The Hebrews were thinking of going back to Judaism. If they do that, they will replace Christ with Judaism. If they do that, they will no longer be God's dwelling place. That is what the "if" tells us.

So just what is it they must hold fast? First, they must hold fast to the confidence of the hope. Over and over this book gives warning. If faithfulness was required of Moses, that is continual faith,

then we can conclude that faithfulness is required of us. And if we do not, that has serious consequences.

Now my understanding of this book in this section from 3:1-6 is the doctrinal section. Up until the time of Christ, the temple was to be God's dwelling place. But now, what the temple pointed to has been fulfilled in Christ, and today the true Christian makes up God's house. God indwells every true believer. And the believer is God's dwelling place if he holds firm the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the end.

So, we are the dwelling place of God, IF we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. What is this hope? Well, when the word hope is used it always speaks of something yet future. One doesn't hope for something that is already present or that has already happened. One only hopes in that which is future.

So, we ask, what is this hope? Let me read the passages in Hebrews that speak of this hope:

*Hebrews 3:6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the **hope** firm to the end.*

*Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of **hope** until the end,*

*Hebrews 6:18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the **hope** set before us.*

*Hebrews 6:19 This **hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and*

*steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

*Hebrews 7:19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better **hope**, through which we draw near to God.*

*Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our **hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

Let me remind us once more that salvation has three tenses. There is past tense salvation. When I repent of my sins and put my faith in Jesus Christ I am saved. When that has been done, initial salvation has happened. It is past. It happens at justification. But then I am to be saved from sin daily as I live along in life. This is present tense salvation and is called sanctification. Then, if one holds fast to one's confidence firm to the end, then one will experience future tense salvation, and this is glorification. It is this glorification that is our hope. It is this we must hold fast. And if we do, it is an anchor of the soul and we do not drift.

So, listen to Romans 8:23-24:

*23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

*24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?*

*25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

Here we learn our hope is future. Let me now read Titus 2:11-14:

11 *For the grace of God has appeared,  
bringing salvation for all people,*

12 *training us to renounce ungodliness  
and worldly passions, and to live  
self-controlled, upright, and godly lives  
in the present age,*

13 *waiting for our blessed hope,  
the appearing of the glory of our great God  
and Savior Jesus Christ,*

14 *who gave himself for us to redeem us  
from all lawlessness and to purify for  
himself a people for his own possession who  
are zealous for good works.*

Our blessed hope is the appearing of the  
glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus  
Christ.

Now listen to Titus 3:4-6:

4 *But when the kindness and the love of  
God our Savior toward man appeared,*

5 *not by works of righteousness which we  
have done, but according to His mercy He  
saved us, through the washing of  
regeneration and renewing of the Holy  
Spirit,*

6 *whom He poured out on us abundantly  
through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

7 *that having been justified by His grace  
we should become heirs according to the  
hope of eternal life.*

The hope is future, and it is eternal life.

1 John 2:2-3 says:

2 *Beloved, we are God's children now, and  
what we will be has not yet appeared; but  
we know that when he appears we shall be*



*like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

*3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

Here the hope is that of seeing Him when He appears. It is this hope that we must hold firm to the end. So, Jesus said in Matthew 24:13 that he who endures to the end will be saved. It is not how one starts, but how one ends the race that is most important. Many have started but they did not end well. Every believer that has this hope of eternal life purifies him or herself.

Now in Hebrews 3:6 we are instructed to hold this hope fast the confidence and rejoicing firm to the end. The word confidence here is *parreesia*. What is this confidence we have? It first means freedom of speech and then boldness or confidence. No doubt that when these Hebrew believers first recognized Jesus Christ as the true Messiah they had great confidence in their new faith. But now, more and more, they have been looking back. And the writer knows if they turn back, they will let that confidence go. They are here reminded that we are only the Lord's dwelling place if we hold this confidence firm to the end.

I was reminded recently, in speaking with one of our youth, about a brother of mine. He was the kind of young person, if something could go wrong, it did so for him. And in his early teens he began to ask Mom what happens to young boys when they die, and she was concerned for him.

Well, I had been long gone from home by that time but I came home one time and she told me this. One night I sat with him and two other younger brothers and I spoke to them about the Lord. And then I mentioned a verse in the next chapter in Hebrews that says, "Today, if you hear His voice do not

harden your hearts." And he said, "If that says today, that means me right now." And he surrendered his life right there.

He began to order Christian books and read and a few years later he was well on his feet. He began to play hockey and was as good as most of the players, and then slowly he began to drift. And I saw that drift happening and I talked to him numerous times, but he kept right on drifting until he was into drugs. And then he shackled up with a woman and to this day he lives like that. He did not hold his confidence firm to the end.

But the verse says further that we must hold fast the rejoicing of hope firm to the end. There is no hope as big as that of the Christian, but it must be held firm to the end.

CONCL: To conclude, the writer to the Hebrews has warned them not to go back to the hope of deliverance through angels. Jesus Christ had become their hope and He should remain their hope. And now he will show that there is no hope in going back to Judaism. Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Jesus Christ has as much more glory than Moses does, as the builder has more glory than the building. Moses was faithful in God's house, but that is now a thing of the past. The significance of that is now fulfilled in Christ and the true believer.

And the amazing thing is that the believer has now become the house of God. It is no longer the temple. God now dwells in those who are poor in spirit, that is they have become humble under the mighty hand of God. They are no longer in charge of their lives, Jesus Christ is. What the Hebrews did not know at this time was that not too long from now things would get much worse than they were right now. When that happened, the temple would be gone and the Jews would be scattered all across the globe, and the Church would be God's work on earth for a long time to come.

Now, the book of Hebrews is written for this purpose: When you commit to Jesus Christ, never look back. If you do, you might go back and no greater warning can be found in Scripture than what we are given in this book. Listen to this "if" in the first

warning in Hebrews 2:3: How shall we escape IF we neglect so great a salvation? Answer. We can no more escape than those who disobeyed in the OT could.

And now we have been told that, not the OT temple, but we, believers are the dwelling place of the Lord. But that is only true "if" we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end. This little word "if" occurs 25 times in Hebrews.

A good number of years ago, the Pentecostal church in the US had a great preacher. He was also a great singer. And in that time, many preachers were seduced by women seeking to destroy them, and one such woman went after this preacher. His name was Jimmy Swaggart, and Jimmy Swaggart fell into sin. Whether he ever truly repented or not, I do not know. But what I sensed happened is that he lost the power of God. The anointing was gone.

Let me give us this warning: If it could happen to him and numerous others, we stand in the same danger of going back on our commitment. There is no assurance in all the Bible that a true believer will always persevere and there is no promise that once a person is saved, he will go to glory no matter how sinful he or she becomes. These "if" warnings are for every believer.

It may be that right now someone here is drifting unawares. Satan has found some inroad and someone is drifting away.