



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Sermon Title: Jesus and Moses

Sermon Text: Hebrews 3.1-6

Related Texts: Exodus 19

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

Do you prefer to follow and pull for the Dodgers or the Angels? Who would you cheer for if one of them was in the World Series?

II. Introduction

God has provided Jesus, the Son, 1) as the full disclosure of God's being; 2) as one who is superior to Moses, angels, and the Law; and 3) as a high priest who makes atonement for people who otherwise would be powerless and helplessly separated from God. Jesus, the Messiah, argues the author of Hebrews, makes people who trust in him to be heirs with him – brothers and sisters – in the Kingdom of God. Now we see the writer encouraging the Hebrew Christians to focus upon Jesus as their true confession of faith.

III. Study the Text – Read Hebrews 3.1-6

- 1) In the first verse, the writer refers to the Hebrew Christians as those who are "holy brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling." In Judaism, those who adhere strictly to the Law of Moses are "holy ones" (or as in this case "holy brothers and sisters"). Here the author says the Hebrew Christians are "holy ones." How have they been made holy? Do you think this is what Jesus meant when he said he had come not to abolish but to fulfill the Law?
- 2) The Hebrews are exhorted to "fix your thoughts on Jesus... apostle, high priest, whom we confess." What does it mean to "confess" Jesus? How did the Hebrew Christians do this? What were the consequences for confessing that Jesus is the Messiah? Are you willing to confess that Jesus is your Savior and Lord – even when there might be negative consequences?
- 3) Look through verses 2 – 4. The writer compares and contrasts Jesus and Moses. Take a look at Exodus 14 and 19 to get a sense of how Moses was faithful to God. Can you see why Moses became deemed to be the greatest deliverer, prophet, and leader of Israel? What argument does the author develop regarding Jesus' being greater than Moses?

Note: The author is careful to show that Jesus was faithful to God just as Moses was. At this point there is a sense of both being faithful to serve God's purposes. Something like both the Dodgers and Angels both being entertaining to watch. But, then the author cites that Jesus is worthy of greater honor – just as the builder of the house deserves greater honor than the house itself. As faithful and important in God's plan as Moses was, Jesus – the Creator of Moses and the Law giver – is greater still.

- 4) Now look at verses 5 and 6. What comes to your mind when you see the phrase “God’s house?” How was the Temple in Jerusalem the house of God? How is the community of people who follow Jesus the house of God? Again, how does the author argue the point that Jesus is greater than Moses in these verses?

Note: Our culture is very interested in political correctness and committed to the idea that no one religion should be touted as being superior to another. While we should be careful to not disparage other religions, we cannot avoid the fact that Christian faith is centered on an individual who made claims and who did things that were unlike any other religious figure. Buddha taught people to find the path to God and was adamant that he was not that path. Jesus claimed to be **the Way** to God. Philosophers and religious figures have declared that they have truth or a way to find truth. Jesus claimed to be **the Truth**. Other religions offer ways to live a good and moral life, in an attempt to become acceptable to God. Jesus claimed to be **the Life** who makes us one with God. Jesus is unique in his claims, in his death, and in his resurrection. He is the Son of God who took on human flesh and came to humankind in order to rescue and lift us up with him... into new life. We should not be shy about respectfully conveying the uniqueness of Jesus.

- 5) Verse 6 suggests that followers of Jesus are his house. What do you think about the conditional phrase that is found here, “if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast?” To what is the author exhorting the Hebrew Christians by adding this phrase? What confidence can a follower of Jesus have based on this phrase?

IV. Apply It – Reflect and Respond

- 1) How would you, if you were a Jewish person who has embraced Jesus as Messiah, respond to the argument that Jesus is greater than Moses? How would that be a watershed belief for you?
- 2) Reflect on Jesus being the apostle sent from God – to convey God’s message; the high priest – who makes you at one with God; and the one you confess – the center of your faith.
- 3) How can you confess or convey your trust in Jesus in effective, respectful ways to others?

...the writer of Hebrews is... clear that Jesus has indeed brought God’s new age to birth, so that the Law, the angels who gave it, and Moses who brought it to God’s people, can’t any longer have the last word. Moses matters, but Jesus matters more; Moses was a true servant of God, but Jesus is God’s Son. You don’t diminish Moses by making Jesus superior to him; you give him his rightful place, which is a place of honor even though it is not the supreme honor. ...the first big point the writer wants his readers to grasp: that the purpose which God was working out through the long years of Israel’s history, with Moses and the Exodus among the key people and moments, really has reached its goal with Jesus.

N.T. Wright