

Greater than Moses

Hebrews 3

Pastor Jim Rademaker

He created some of the most monumental, some of the most unique, some of the most awe-inspiring spaces in America. He designed everything: banks and resorts, office buildings and churches, a filling station and a synagogue, a beer garden and an art museum. He's been recognized by the American Institute of Architects as "the greatest American architect of all time". Born in Richland Center, Wisconsin. His name? Frank Lloyd Wright. Who was greater, who receives more honor, the handyman who works around his homes, or Wright himself? The servant or the builder?

HEBREWS 2 "Therefore, we must pay **much closer attention** to what we have heard ..." Heard about what? About such a great salvation in Jesus! (Hebrews 1) It was declared first by the Lord Jesus Himself. It was attested to by those who heard, the apostles. It was testified to by God Himself, through what? Through the miracles that the apostles performed – to show that the apostles and their message about Jesus were the real deal! This great salvation was testified to by the gifts of the Holy Spirit poured out into people's lives – moving them, changing them.

"We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard ..." Lest what? "... lest we **drift away** from it!" That's what was happening to some of the followers of Jesus in the first century. They were losing their focus. They were drifting away from what was really important; what really mattered – Jesus. And we today, do the same thing, don't we?

As we are, these first century Christians were being distracted. What were they turning to instead of Jesus? Angels. Angels were becoming more important to them. Angels grabbed their attention away from Jesus. What grabs our attention away from Jesus? A million different things, even within the church. And the question is asked, "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" How shall we escape God's judgment and His resulting punishment? The answer? We won't!

HEBREWS 3 – "**Therefore**, holy brothers [and sisters], 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.

Moses – that great Old Testament figure! To the Jews of Jesus' day, Moses meant everything. Moses, their great leader. Moses, whom God spoke with. Moses, who led them out of slavery in Egypt. Moses, who came down the mountain with the Ten Commandments. Moses, who instructed them in building the tabernacle, in instituting the priesthood and the sacrificial system, and their laws and their festivals, how to live their daily lives! Everything, that made them who they were. Moses, who led them to the Promised Land. Without Moses, what did they have?

But the Jews who are addressed in the book of Hebrews had come to believe in Jesus as their Messiah; the One Moses spoke of! Jesus – Creator of all, Sustainer of all, Heir of all, the Radiance of God's glory, God's Son, Redeemer, Savior, Forerunner of our future-restored dominion over the earth, Jesus now sitting where? At the right hand of God in Glory, ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords!

And so, as important as Moses was to these early Jewish Christians, he was *far exceeded* by the superiority of Jesus! The author makes this point how? He says what? Both Moses and Jesus have something in common. What is it? *Faithfulness*. Both were faithful to God. Moses was faithful as what? *A part of God's house, God's people, God's family. Faithful as a servant.* But Jesus was faithful as what? Not just the handyman, but the *builder* of God's house, God's people, God's family. Therefore, He is worthy of *more* glory. Faithful as a Son, the Son of God!

"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." Or more glory than those in the house, those who make up the house, those who live in the house.

These Christians were getting confused. They were going astray. They were losing their focus on Jesus and who He was. And they started elevating *other* things as of more importance. Things like angels. Figures like Moses, their great leader. And so, they're reminded, *we're reminded*, "Who was greater, Moses the *servant* in God's house, or Jesus, the Son of God, the *builder* of God's house?"

"Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant ..." To do what? "... to testify to the things that were to be spoken later." What would be said in the future that Moses was testifying to? Like John the Baptist, pointing and saying what? "Behold! *THE Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world!" *And beginning with Moses, and all the Prophets*, [Jesus] explained to them what was written in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27)

"Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later ..." Moses was all about Jesus! The LAW – pointing to the Only One who has ever kept it. The TABERNACLE – pointing to the true/everlasting dwelling of God with man. And so, Jesus said what? "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" *The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body.* (John 2:19-21)

Moses was a servant, a member of God's household, who pointed forward, who testified about Jesus. Jesus was the important thing, not Moses. And so, don't turn back to Moses, to the Law. Don't turn back to the temple. Don't turn back to the rules and regulations, which were to be temporary, which pointed to the One to come. They all find their fulfillment in Jesus. Fix your eyes on Him, the apostle, the Sent One, and high priest we confess.

Jesus was faithful to the One whose will it was that He should be sent to the world as a baby, as The Lamb of God, to take away our sin. Moses was faithful as a member of God's house; as a servant. Jesus was faithful as a son. The Son who said in the garden, what? "*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*" (Luke 22:42)

"And **we** are his house" [We are part of His household, children, sons and daughters, family.] if what? "... **If** indeed we **hold fast** our confidence and our boasting in our hope." Hold fast. Not letting go of Jesus, and turning back to something else, like angels, or Moses and the Law and the temple, with its sacrifices, or other things in the Bible or other things in life. Keeping our focus on Jesus, THE high priest we confess. Greater than angels. Greater than Moses. Greater than anything else in the world. Greater than anything in our lives!

And we are his house, [We are part of God's household – His children, sons and daughters] ... if what? ... *If indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.* But what if we don't? What if we don't hold on to Jesus, then what? If we no longer pay close attention to what we've heard, if we lose our focus on Jesus, if we neglect such a great salvation and we turn away from Jesus, and drift away ... then what?

How shall we escape God's judgment? How shall we escape, as Jesus said, "*the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth?*" (Mt 13:50) How shall we escape "*the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels?*" (Mt 25:41)

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, [in Psalm 95] "*Today, if you hear his voice ...*" Today, if God is speaking to your heart. Today, if God is calling you to repentance. Today, if God's asking you to trust Him. Today, if He's calling you to do the right thing. Today, if you're going the wrong way. "*Today, if you hear his voice ...*" What? "... *do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.*"

No people had ever experienced the delivering hand of God like the ancient Israelites. After being in bondage to the Egyptians for over 400 years, what did God do? He freed them and led them out! Coming to the Red Sea, they witnessed the Lord's power as he opened up the sea, and they crossed over on dry ground, while their pursuers got stuck in the mud and drowned in the receding waters.

But no sooner had Israel celebrated this mighty deliverance, then they did what? They complained bitterly because the water was bitter at Marah. The Lord provided sweet water. They grumbled about having no food. The Lord provided manna from heaven. This is the history the writer of Hebrews calls to mind for us today. "*Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.*" (Psalm 95)

Instead, what? Psalm 95:1 *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving ... Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

Having made it to Kadesh-Barnea, on the verge of entering the Promised Land, what happened? The ultimate test of their faith lay before them. Would they trust God and enter the Land? Or would they succumb to those who doubted God and said it was impossible to defeat the giants who in the land? Would they fear in unbelief or would they go forth in trust and joy?

For forty years this went on. The children of Israel testing the Lord instead of trusting Him. Rather than having a grateful spirit for astounding deliverances and limitless blessings, there was a settled attitude of complaint. The problem? It wasn't God. It wasn't their circumstances. It was what? It was their grumbling hearts. Does *your* heart ever grumble? Do you have a hardened heart? Hard towards others? Hard towards God? Not soft, and repentant, and humble, and trusting?

Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray where? In their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" This example of the Israelites, is applied to the readers of Hebrews; to *us today*. If unbelief kept the Israelites out of the Promised Land (a picture of God's rest), how much more serious is it today, if our hearts drift away? If our hearts lose their focus. If our hearts no longer hold on to Jesus, and we lose the greater rest, the eternal rest, found in Jesus?

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.

Take care, brothers [and sisters], lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

How will we hold our confidence in Christ firm to the end? By hearing God's voice today. Every day it is called "today" we are called to hear and receive and respond to the voice of the Lord. To respond in repentance and in faith. Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, you who share in a heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus!