

School of the Word
Hebrews
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HEBREWS 3:1-6

Reading: *Christ our High Priest* by Cardinal Albert Vanhoye (ISBN 9780852447680)

Sequence

- ▶ Heb 3:1-6
- ▶ The place in the letter
- ▶ Commentary
- ▶ Reflection

Hebrew 3:1-4 (NABRev)

Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy “brothers,” sharing in a heavenly calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was “faithful in [all] his house.” 3 But he is worthy of more “glory” than Moses, as the founder of a house has more “honour” than the house itself. Heb 3:4 Every house is founded by someone, but the founder of all is God. 5 Moses was “faithful in all his house” as a “servant” to testify to what would be spoken, 6 but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house, if [only] we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope.

In the letter as a whole

- ▶ **3:1-6 The Son is greater than Moses**
- ▶ 3:7-11 Faithless people
- ▶ 3:12-19 Failure to enter God’s rest
- ▶ 4:1-11 God’s rest is still available
- ▶ 4:12-13 The word of God is alive and active

Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy “brothers,” sharing in a heavenly calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was “faithful in [all] his house.”

- ▶ Therefore links with faithfulness in 2:18.
- ▶ Hearers addressed as “holy brothers (and sisters).”
- ▶ Cf. ones sanctified from 2:11.
- ▶ Heavenly: belonging to the realm of the gods.
- ▶ Calling: the only use in Hebrews.
- ▶ Reflect: the look at, to consider, to contemplate

Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy “brothers,” sharing in a **heavenly** calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the **heavenly** gift and shared in the holy Spirit

Heb 8:5 They worship in a copy and shadow of the **heavenly** sanctuary, as Moses was warned when he was about to erect the tabernacle. For he says, “See that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

Heb 9:23 Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the **heavenly** things to be purified by these rites, but the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices than these.

Heb 11:16 But now they desire a better homeland, a **heavenly** one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Heb 12:22 No, you have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the **heavenly** Jerusalem, and countless angels in festal gathering,

- ▶ Apostle and high priest: unique to Hebrews.
- ▶ Apostle: one sent from God's "side."
- ▶ High priest: one who responds from the human "side."
- ▶ Thus, in Hebrews, Jesus is the mediator.
- ▶ Confession: *homologia*, or creed.

Heb 8:6 Now he has obtained so much more excellent a ministry as he is **mediator** of a better covenant, enacted on better promises.

first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

Heb 9:15 For this reason he is **mediator** of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the

Heb 12:24 and Jesus, the **mediator** of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel.

- ▶ The faithfulness of Jesus is a key to the inner disposition of Jesus as high priest.
- ▶ Lit. faithful to "the one who made him", i.e. created him. Jesus' humanity is in view here.
- ▶ This faithfulness to God leads to a comparison with Moses.
- ▶ Reference to Numbers 12 in the Septuagint (LXX).
- ▶ Moses' authority comes from his breath-taking intimacy with God.
- ▶ Cf. And there has not again arisen a prophet in Israel like Moyses whom the Lord knew face-to-face, (Deut 34:10 NETS)

Heb 3:3 But he is worthy of more "glory" than Moses, as the founder of a house has more "honour" than the house itself. 4 Every house is founded by someone, but the founder of all is God.

- ▶ The important words are glory and honour.
- ▶ Culturally, these are markers of status.
- ▶ Culturally, Moses is a servant (attendant), whereas Jesus is the Son.
- ▶ Founder: found mostly in Hebrews (see texts)
- ▶ "Glory" is polyvalent: both divine and human.

Heb 3:3 But he is worthy of more "glory" than Moses, as the **founder** of a house has more "honour" than the house itself. 4 Every house is **founded** by someone, but the **founder** of all is God.

Heb 9:6 With these **arrangements** for worship, the priests, in performing their service, go into the outer tabernacle repeatedly,

Heb 9:2 For a tabernacle was **constructed**, the outer one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of offering; this is called the Holy Place.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, warned about what was not yet seen, with reverence **built** an ark for the salvation of his household. Through this he condemned the world and inherited the righteousness that comes through faith

- ▶ House has two meanings.
- ▶ A physical building.
- ▶ A dynasty or nation.
- ▶ Here, the author focuses on the building.
- ▶ If building is praised, the builder is also honoured.
- ▶ Thus, if God is the founder, then God's Son is more important than God's household attendant.
- ▶ All honour ultimately goes to God
- ▶ The Son is not simply faithful like Moses but is "the Son."
- ▶ Moses is always positive in Hebrews.
- ▶ He witnessed "to things yet to be spoken of"
- ▶ Christ: here almost a personal name.
- ▶ Because the son is "over" the house, his faithfulness is all the more important.

- ▶ The metaphor of house shifts from a building to a family: we are his house.
- ▶ Our belonging to the household of Jesus is, however, conditional.

Reflections

- ▶ The author is balancing different teachings: Jesus is higher than the angels, lower than the angels, fully human and yet higher than Moses.
- ▶ Why Moses at all?
- ▶ Moses in the NT.
- ▶ Moses and the Temple.
- ▶ NB Moses was not a priest.