

# SERMON GUIDE

Hebrews: The Builder and Keeper of the House

Hebrews 3:1-6



## SERMON NOTES:

**Scripture Exegesis: Hebrews 3:1-6**

***VS 1 -- Therefore holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession***

This is the first time in the letter that the author addresses the readers directly. He calls the believers, “holy brothers.” Why? There are two important aspects of this phrase. One, the phrase “brother”; is connected to everything he just said about Jesus being our brother because he became flesh to save us. We are now “brothers” with Christ. A familial terms that shows we are a part of the family of God. Second, the phrase “holy” describes our righteous standing and position we have in Christ. Positionally before God we are declared “holy” because we are in Christ. His righteousness covers us. Practically, we are still being made holy, sanctified, day by day. So we are addressed as holy brothers. We as holy brothers share in a heavenly calling. As Jesus came from heaven to earth, became flesh and our brother, we too as flesh through Christ receive a heavenly calling. We have an eternal inheritance awaiting us. We spoke a few weeks ago about the reality of heaven coming to earth at the end of all things. This is the heavenly calling we await. But we share it now in Christ.

He exhorts us to “consider Jesus.” By this he means for us to deeply reflect on and understand what he’s about to unfold in the coming verses. Specifically, he wants us to grasp the significance of Jesus’ role and identity. He is the apostle and high priest of our confession. This is a pretty awesome set of descriptions that are each doing something different. An apostle is a “sent one.” A sent one has the authority and commission of the one sending them.

An apostle of a church is like a missionary or church planter. An apostle of Christ is sent out by Christ and has His authority (like the 12). But here in this passage, Jesus is described as an apostle. He was sent out by God the Father and represents God to us. But he’s also described as a high priest, that is, as one of us to represent us to God. The high priest was always selected from among the people and stands to represent them before God. So watch this...the phrase “apostle and high priest” means that Jesus is the perfect bridge between God and man. As an apostle of God, He represents God perfectly to us, and as our high priest, he represents us perfectly to God. Notice that the Hebrew writer says “our confession.” So already at this point in the Christian community around the world, there was a unified confession. There was already a “faith once for all delivered to the saints.” This confession was the body of knowledge and beliefs held by Christians. Key to those at this point were things like: Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is Lord, Jesus is the Son of God. Later we are going to see the Hebrew writer tell the believers to hold fast to this

hope, this confession. This implies that the content of this confession was identified and grasped by the Christian community.

***VS 2 -- who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.***

Starting here in vs 2, the Hebrew writer is about to discuss Jesus in relation to Moses. In the Jewish world, Moses may be the top of the list. Abraham, Moses, and David would rank pretty high in the order of importance. The covenant was made with Abraham to be the father of the nation, but Moses was the nation's greater prophet and leader. It was Moses who led them out of captivity. It was Moses that God gave the law to for the people. Moses was esteemed. So the writer wants to help them understand the relationship between Jesus and Moses.

He begins by saying Jesus was faithful to Him (God the Father) who appointed Him, just as Moses was also faithful in all of God's house. This call to remember Moses' faithfulness is a quote from Numbers 12:7.

Moses was faithful despite opposition he constantly faced from others, especially those Israelites that wanted to return to Egypt because they lacked food and water. Aaron and Miriam challenged his leadership as well.

Now what is the reference in Hebrews and Numbers of "God's house" refer to? The house in Numbers was not the tent of meeting, but the people of Israel, the family of God. The same is true for what the Hebrew writer is referring. The house is the people of God, both at the time of Moses and at the time of Christ, and ever since. All believers inhabit the same house. There's one house.

Let me take a moment to establish some theological understanding and roots for us. We evangelicals in America have not been educated very well in covenant theology. So this leads many people to misunderstand the connection of the Old Testament and New Testament, and the nation of Israel vs True Israel. (STORY: arguing with a friend years ago who was convinced God had two sets of people: ethnic Jews and born-again Christians). Some of you may hold to this view too, but it's because we don't understand the covenant. Let me try to quickly explain.

The Gentiles were cut out of a wild olive tree and were grafted into the cultivated olive tree, which was Israel. Unbelieving Jews were removed from Israel. The same tree was Israel the whole time and throughout the whole process. Ethnic Jews are described as the natural branches, and ethnic Gentiles who believe are the branches grafted in. Ethnic Jews who did not believe were cut out. But make no mistake: there's only one olive tree. There is only one Israel. Membership in this Renewed Israel through faith alone.

Paul says in Ephesians 2:12 that the previously excluded Gentiles have now been made citizens of the commonwealth of Israel. They were strangers to the covenant and promise to Abraham, but now they are strangers no more. The argument of the New Testament is that Gentiles, through Christ, have been made Israelites. They have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel. Israel isn't abolished. It has been greatly expanded.

So back to our Hebrew author and the house that both Moses and Jesus were faithful to. It is the same house. Christians are Jews (spiritually speaking). Moses is a Christian. This is why the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 2:16 that it wasn't angels that Jesus helped, but the offspring of Abraham.

***VS 3-4 -- 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 of God.)***

Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. Why? Because Jesus is the builder of the house and not just a member of it. Moses was a member of the house. He was one of the people of God. But Jesus is the builder of the house. He is the One that builds and makes a people for God. Jesus atoned for Moses' sins on the cross. Jesus makes Moses fit for the house. The builder of the house gets more glory than the house because the house is the builder's idea, design, and creation. But the builder of all things is God. God gets more glory than the things built.

So the Hebrew writer says Jesus is worthy of more honor and glory than Moses even though both were faithful to God.

***VS 5-6 -- Now Moses was 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 And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.***

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We must hold fast to our confession. We must hold fast to our confidence and boasting in this hope we've entered into. This raises a theme that will occur over and over in Hebrews: perseverance. We've already heard it earlier in Hebrews 2 when we were told "pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away." He asks how we shall escape judgment if we neglect this great salvation. Now he says we are the "his house" or "his people" if we hold fast.

This conditional language about receiving the eternal inheritance IF we stay the course is all over the New Testament. We need to do some theological work here. We have some Christians who believe you can lose your salvation (and that you can get saved and resaved over and over). Others believe you can never lose your salvation (but then think that means that those whose lives don't reflect trust in the Lord are saved). So let's take a minute to talk this out.

Let me do an illustration by giving a scenario.

Jim is a business man in a church who has amassed a fortune through crooked business dealings and multiple companies that are involved in illegal activities. Jennifer is a woman at a church who has been committing adultery on her husband for the last three years. Both, at separate times, are confronted with their sins, but they defend themselves and refuse to repent.

Which of the following statements are you likely to say to them?

- “Jim/Jennifer, you’re definitely going to hell.”
- “Jim/Jennifer, if you don’t repent, then you will not be saved when Jesus returns.”
- “Jim/Jennifer, I believe that you are a Christian and that your eternal salvation is secure, but if you continue in this sin, you will lose rewards in heaven.”
- “Jim/Jennifer, I believe that you were a Christian. But this unrepentant sin means that you have lost your salvation. You need to repent and believe in Jesus in order to be re-saved.”

This scenario gets to the heart of what we think about salvation and perseverance. Lifelong perseverance in the faith is the necessary evidence that we have been saved. If we fail to persevere in the faith, we will not enter the kingdom. The answer that I believe aligns with Scripture is: “Jim/Jennifer, if you don’t repent, then you will not be saved when Jesus returns.”

It is important as we talk about this doctrine that we distinguish it from things that are often taught. Some people talk about “eternal security” or “once saved always saved.” With perseverance of the saints, the idea stressed is the continuance of the believer in the faith. With eternal security or “once saved always saved” the idea stresses a non-active sealing of the believer regardless of actions. I don’t think we find that in the Bible. We must hold fast to the faith if we are to be saved, if we are to remain in God’s house.

“Believed in vain.” What does this mean? How can we know we haven’t “believed in vain”? The phrase implies that they did not continue or hold fast in the faith. To ensure we have not believed in vain, we must hold fast to the word preached (the gospel). The “believe” in “believed in vain” is an active verb. It implies ongoing action. It isn’t just a first act of faith, but ongoing faith. Faith that doesn’t persevere is what James called a dead faith (James 2:17, 26).

What is the key condition that must be met if we are to be presented holy and blameless before God on the last day? “If” we: continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel. We find this all over the Bible.

There are three categories of people that exist.

First, those who were never in the house. They have no connection to the Christian faith at all.

Second, those who are in the house, but only temporarily. Here’s what I mean by that. They were connected to Christ through being in a church or even a confession they made at some point (perhaps even a baptism), but they are not truly in Christ. This is a hard one. There are lots of scenarios that could explain this one. It could be an individual who grew up in a Christian family, participated in the life of the church, confessed Christ and sang songs to the Lord, but one day walked away from the faith when they got older. Or maybe it is an individual who is a part of the visible church their entire lives and

never walk away, but they are not truly trusting Christ. There is no saving faith. These are real people. Jesus talks about the weeds growing among the wheat as an example of this (Matthew 13:24-30).

Third, there are true sons of the house. They are the elect of God. And they abide forever in the house. Jesus said in John 8:35-36, "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

So do we have reason for confidence that we will stay the course? What hope do we have? The good news: the necessity of us holding fast to the faith isn't the whole story; it is God who preserves and keeps us in the faith.

We are to persevere in the faith, that is the requirement of salvation, yet God is the one who ensures we will be kept.

How can we have confidence that we won't fall away from Christ? How does this verse encourage those who aren't sure whether they will persevere to the end? We see that God is able to keep us from stumbling and present us blameless before the presence of His glory. John 10:25-30 reminds us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The sheep hear his voice. The sheep follow him. Then Jesus promises that he will preserve us by not allowing anyone to snatch us from his hand.

God makes two promises in this verse: He will not turn from doing us good, he will put a fear of Him in our hearts to keep us from turning away.

So rather than living in fear of falling away, seek the Lord each day. Hold fast to your confession. Trust the Lord to do His part in keeping you while you do your part in seeking Him. The builder of the house will hold you fast.



## LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?



## LOOK UP

- **REVIEW:**
  - Read **Hebrews 3:1-6** and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
  - What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
  - Additional Scripture:
    - Numbers 12:7
    - Romans 11:24
    - Romans 11:20
    - Galatians 4:1-5
    - 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
    - 1 Peter 2:4-5
    - 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
    - Colossians 1:21-23
    - 1 Peter 1:3-5
    - Jude 24-25
    - Jeremiah 32:40
- **REFLECT:**
  - In what way are we considered holy?
  - What is covenant theology? Have you heard of it before?
  - Review the illustration of Jim and Jennifer under verses 5-6. Which of the statements do you believe is true?
  - What are some practical ways you can work out your salvation and persevere to the end?
- **RESPOND:**
  - Do you find comfort that Jesus is able to help you when you are tempted?
  - Do you think of yourself as a theologian? Why or why not?
  - What steps will you take to grow in this area?
  - How does growing as a theologian help in the following areas:
    - Battling Satan?

- Sanctification?
  - Walking with Christ?
- **MEDITATE:**
  - Hebrews 3:5-6 -- Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were spoken later; but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.
- **MEMORIZE:**
  - John 1:12 – But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God



- **FOLLOW:** How will you follow Jesus this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **FISH:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story, your story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
  - Pray over any request from your group members.
  - Shepherding Elder - **Brandon Sutton**
  - Ministry - **Discipleship**
  - **Pray for our long-term units on the field:**
    - The Wilsons
    - The Grays
    - The Starks
  - **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
    - Kaesi
    - Ethan & Dustin (May 16 - June 30)
  - **Pray for our short-term teams:**
    - Southeast Asia Team #2 departing on June 15
    - London Team departing June 30
    - Asian Pacific Rim Team #2 departing August 16
    - Central Asia Team #2 departing on September 27
  - **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Comorian in France



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- **Population in Country:** 97,000
- **Global Population:** 97,000
- **Christian Adherent:** 0.00%
- **Evangelical:** 0.00%
- **Primary Religion:** Islam
- **Primary Language:** Comorian, Maore
- **Summary:** Comorians are among many other African migrants who live in France. Thousands have risked their lives to migrate to France and when they get there they live in poverty.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray for the few Comorian believers to be salt and light to their neighbors. Pray that the Lord would equip Christ followers in France to share the gospel with Comorian immigrants. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Comorians in France. Pray that they would experience freedom from physical and spiritual suffering through Jesus Christ.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>