

**Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church**  
**The Letter to the Hebrews – Chapter 3, Verses 1-6**  
**Notes From Class on August 25, 2009**  
**Last Revised on (August 29, 2009)**

Good evening everyone!

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Welcome to our continuing study of the New Testament Book of Hebrews.

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Before we begin, I would like to make sure that you have everything you will need.

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Tonight you will each need a Bible and a Song Book.

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When we have finished singing, please hang on to your song book, and wait until the end of class to return it, because at some point we will refer to the Apostle's Creed which appears at the back of the song book.

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If your Bible happens to be the English Standard Version (ESV) then you are all set.

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However if you are using some other English Translation, then it may also help you to have the handout which I have prepared, containing the ESV text of Hebrews, Chapters 2 and 3.

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There is coffee and tea at the back.

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Please get what you need and, then, let's get started.

### **Review**

As we have been discussing, Hebrews is an inspired text, written in Greek, around the end of the First Century A.D.

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It appears to be the text of a sermon, written by a Christian preacher, to be given to a particular congregation of Christian believers.

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The preacher and those to whom he preached seem to have known one another to some extent, which is important for our understanding of the text,

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but we do not know who any of these people were, or anything about them beyond what can be inferred from the text we are studying.

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From the text (e.g. 2:3) we can infer that neither the author nor those whom he addresses were Apostles or primary witnesses of what Jesus said and did among men. This is also important for our understanding.

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Like us they had, at some point, heard and come to believe the testimony of the Apostolic Church, and been baptized into it, having made a suitable confession of faith.

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Tonight we will spend quite a lot of time mulling over the question of what that "confession" was.

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The congregation appears to have consisted not primarily of seekers or new believers but, rather, of those who had first confessed their faith and been baptized a long time before hearing this sermon. (5:12)

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One of the preacher's primary objectives seems to be to admonish and encourage this congregation to hold fast to that confession and not to neglect it or let it slip away. (2:1)

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To the extent that we need such admonishment (and I believe that all Christians need such admonishment, "lest we slip away" ) the New Testament book of Hebrews speaks to us.

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We have carefully read, and reviewed several times, the first two chapters of Hebrews.

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We will necessarily refer to these chapters again, from time to time, as we read on into subsequent chapters,

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But I will not do a careful review of Chapter's 1 and 2 tonight or perhaps ever again.

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All of the material from previous classes has been being posted to the Google group site which has been created for this purpose.

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Please go there and review the notes from previous classes, as necessary.

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Before we read on into Chapter Three of Hebrews, does anyone have any questions?

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OK, let's read on.

### **Chapter Three**

Will somebody please read Hebrews, Chapter Three, verses 1-6, in English (ESV).

**Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,<sup>2</sup> who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)<sup>5</sup> Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later,<sup>6</sup> 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.**

Thank you. Now will somebody please read this in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku).

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Thank you.

### **Verse 1**

Once again, Verse 1 reads: **“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,”**

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The idea of we Christians being a family: children of God, and brothers of Christ, has already been developed in Chapter 2, especially in verses 10 through 17.

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And that is a common idea elsewhere in scripture.

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So nothing new or surprising is added here at the start of Chapter 3 when our author says “Therefore holy **brothers** and etc.”

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Here and in many other places in the New Testament, the English word “brothers” translates the Greek word “*adelphoi*” which may sometimes also be translated “siblings.”

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*The New Revised Standard Version* ("NRSV") of the Bible reads, “Therefore, brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling,”

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Almost certainly it is correct to understand here that our author is addressing both Christian men and women who, he says, are “**holy**.”

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To be "holy" means, in some sense, to be set apart for God and, so, separated from the world.

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He also says that they “share” (ESV) or are “partners in” (NRSV) a “**heavenly calling**,”

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This means, at least, that the holy brothers and sisters have been called by the One who is in heaven, namely God.

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It may also have the nuance of them being called heavenward.

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This idea seems already present in Chapter 2, especially in verse 10, where it speaks of God bringing “many sons to glory,”

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“**Therefore...**” he says to God's holy sons and daughters “...**consider Jesus.**”

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Q. Why should they consider Jesus?

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A. So many reasons have been given in Chapters 1 and 2.

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In the first chapter of Hebrews we were reminded of the unqualified supremacy of Christ,

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that he is before and after and above everything on Earth and in the Heavens, including all of God's angels.

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There is literally no place and no time we could consider that does not belong to Jesus, or where Jesus does not ultimately rule.

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Q. How could we properly consider **anything** without considering Jesus?

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A. We could not. He is that perfect light which dispels all error and confusion (Calvin)

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He is the eternal Son of God and God.

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And while the Son of God was humbled for a while, having entered human history so as to suffer and die for us, and been for a time a little lower than the angels, we have been reminded that this is part of his eternal perfection and evidence of the grace of God,

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because it was through his death and resurrection that Satan, sin, and death have been overcome (2:14,15)

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Jesus is, we are told, the “**founder** of our salvation” (2:10).

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This is a figure of speech that evokes the image of one who is the “founder of a great city or nation.”

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It is as if our salvation is a **place** that he has created especially for us,

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a place subjected not to angels and Law but to redeemed man,

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a place to which we Christians have been called: the "world to come" of Chapter 2.

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But not only these things.

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Jesus is no distant God, far away, or far above us, unconcerned with our problems.

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Jesus is our brother (as has been said) our Saviour, and the One through whom God has kept all of his promises to Abraham, Moses, David, and all the rest.

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It is for the salvation of we humans (not angels) the Son of God specifically came and, because he became like us, he is able to sanctify us, by making propitiation for our sins, and helping us to overcome temptations.

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We exist and are saved and are being sanctified because of who he is and what he has done and is doing

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Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, you who share in a heavenly calling, "consider Jesus."

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These two words, "consider Jesus," are a summary of all that has been said in Chapters 1 and 2.

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Now, here at the start of Chapter 3, the author refers to Jesus as "the apostle and high priest of our **confession**."

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of **our** confession. (Do we hear this emphasis?)

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What does this mean?

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The English word “confession” has several possible meanings, more than one of which has a specialized meaning within a Christian context.

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So let’s be careful with this word, and spend some time with it tonight.

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We often speak of confession of **sin**, which means, at least, admitting our sins to God, which, since God knows everything, essentially means admitting our sins to ourselves.

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God knows all of our sins (past, present, and future) far better than we do.

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Confession of sin also sometimes means confessing our sins to other people, who, unlike God, might not otherwise know what our sins are, unless we tell them.

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Q. In Verse 1 of Chapter 3, is the author of Hebrews speaking of confession of **sin**?

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***n.b. Some in the class answered "yes." Others said, "no," and thought that the author is here speaking of confession of faith. We finally agreed that the latter is correct. The author is here speaking about confession of faith.***

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I am going to speak much more about confessions of faith in a moment, but before I do, I wish to share with you something that occurred to me for the first time as I was preparing for this class.

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I realized that there is a certain similarity between confession of sin and confession of faith.

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In both cases, God already knows the truth before we confess it.

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Our confession, whether it is the confession of a sin or of our faith, does not grant unto God any new information.

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Our confession may, however, if it is sincere, bring us new information.

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Because it is often not until we are moved to confess something, be it a sin or an article of our faith, that we become aware of the truth of what we say and the depth of our sincerity in saying it.

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But often I think we are not fully aware of the depth of our sincerity, whether in confessing a sin or an article of faith until we are actually required to do something based on that confession.

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A sin once confessed must be repented of (that means we must stop doing it) and this may sometimes require us to make a public confession, to apologize, to make restitution, to seek counseling or get other help, and so forth, depending on the circumstances of our sin.

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Confession of sin without repentance is empty and, sometimes perhaps, worse than no confession at all!

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Likewise an article of faith once confessed must be acted on. This may mean a public confession of faith and possibly some additional action which is difficult or dangerous or expensive or inconvenient etc.

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Faith is rarely proved by doing something that is easy and comfortable and self-serving, like attending a friendly and entertaining church service or Bible study.

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And failure to act in accordance with our faith is sin.

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Just as all sin is ultimately a lack of faith.

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Isn't it interesting how these two things, faith and sin, and these two types of confession are interrelated, and share many similar characteristics?

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In every case the test of what we believe in our heart is what we confess with our mouth and what we do based on our confession.

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And in every case, God already knows everything ahead of time, but we learn a lot about ourselves through what we confess and what we do next.

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As just one example, consider Abraham and Isaac.

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When God commanded Abram to sacrifice Isaac, we can be sure that God was not surprised when Abraham complied.

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God doesn't need to do experiments.

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But Abraham learned something that day. He learned the extent of his faith in God.

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We are all like that, I think, it is not until we are required to say or do something costly that we know what we really believe. Examine your own life and see!

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Conversely, when the problems are removed --- the problems which require us to act in faith --- there is immediately a danger that we will drift away from our faith.

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This may be relevant to our continuing study of Hebrews, because if you are reading ahead, you will have noticed that the congregation which first heard this sermon had once patiently endured hard struggles just after they first believed (cf. Hebrews 10:32). It is only now, that they are in relatively easier circumstances, that they are prone to drift away.

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Now back to Hebrews, Chapter Three, Verse 1

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The author tells us to consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our **confession**.

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Here the word "confession" clearly means "**confession of faith**" and not confession of sin.

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And the preacher refers to this confession of faith as "**our** confession", meaning he shares it with them.

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Sins are not so easily shared.

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So what would be the content of this confession that they all shared?

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What does their confession of faith consist of?

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What does any confession of faith consist of?

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And what does OUR confession of faith (yours and mine) consist of?

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Many of you will be familiar with one or possibly even several of the modern confessions of faith such as the Augsburg Confession or the Westminster Confession,

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which are the best known confessions, respectively, of the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches.

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Other Protestant churches have similar confessional statements as do Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and other Christian Churches.

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How many of you have seen something like that?

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Such confessions are normally set forth in writing.

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They are usually fairly long. Just for example, the paperback copy of the Westminster Confession which I have at home runs to more than 100 pages, just for the Confession.

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The oldest of these confessional statements of this type are, I should say, just a few hundred years old, which may seem old to us, but is quite young compared to the New Testament Book of Hebrews.

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So our author plainly does not have a lengthy document in mind when he uses the words "our confession."

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Lengthy written confessions of this comparatively modern variety did not exist in those days, but the smaller precursors of these lengthy documents were then just beginning to take shape.

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Another word for "confession" in the sense we are now examining is "creed."

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Most of you are probably familiar with the "Apostles Creed" which is recited every Sunday in many churches.

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As you may know, most of the Apostles Creed was written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, which is really rather close to the time when Hebrews was written and, so, might give us a better idea of what sort of confession our author might have in his mind.

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The Apostle's Creed is printed in the song books on the table, in both English and Japanese.

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Please grab one of those and have a look.

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Let's recite the Apostle's Creed together in English.

## **THE APOSTLE'S CREED**

**"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**"I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.**

**"Amen."**

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The Apostle's Creed, which we just read, has long been one of the most universally accepted confessions of the Christian Church in all of its various branches.

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Even today Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant churches of every description confess the Apostles Creed.

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We can all call this "our confession."

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We may have some other beliefs and practices which are, as they say, "distinctive," and so our longer and more complete confessional and creedal statements may diverge we may have different styles of worship.

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However whomever can honestly make the confession known as the Apostles Creed may rightfully call themselves Christian, or so it seems to me.

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So you and I could confidently encourage one another, and other Christians, to "hold to" the confession called the Apostles Creed with very little fear of leading anyone astray or of being accused by any other Christians of propagating false teaching.

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Conversely we should have some concern for anyone who can **not** honestly make the confession called the Apostle's Creed.

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That person would have a personal confession of faith which is at odds with that of the vast majority of Christians who have ever lived, between the time of the Apostles until today.

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That person's salvation might be in jeopardy and their teaching would certainly be suspect as well as their ability even to read and understand the Bible. This could be a very big deal.

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The content of our faith is important.



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 OK then. Among the Christian creeds still confessed to this day, the Apostle's Creed may be the best example of what the author of Hebrews had in mind in verse 1 of Chapter 3.

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 But let's try to answer the question another way, by digging into the Bible itself.

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 The question, once again, is what does the author mean by the phrase "our confession?"

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 The English word "confession" which we have just been discussing and now hopefully understand the general sense of has here been selected to translate the Greek word "homologia,"

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 which comes from the word "homologos," meaning literally "of one mind."

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 "Our confession" in other words is that regarding which we (you and I) are of one mind,

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 that on which we agree,

---  
 The author of Hebrews is presuming that he and those whom he is addressing are all of one mind regarding certain things --- i.e. that there are certain things on which they all agree--- what he calls "our confession."

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 It seem unlikely to me that there is any real confusion or disagreement among them regarding what the contents of that confession are.

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 Whatever confession they all made at the time of their baptism, perhaps something very close to the Apostle's Creed, I guess that most of them can still recite it and nearly all of them can remember the substantive content.

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 I don't pick up any signals here that anyone has been recanting their confession.

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 They know what it is and formally still confess it but still they are in danger of drifting away from it, now that the difficult early days are past.

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 So the preacher is asking them to return to their own confession with new eyes and to see it again as they once did.

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 It is clear enough by now that their confession has something to do with Jesus or perhaps we should say everything to do with Jesus.

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 It is he whom they are being asked to "consider" here in verse 1

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 He whom the author has called the apostle and high priest of their homologia (confession).

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 This word, homologia, is not used very frequently in the New Testament: only seven times, I believe.

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 Three of these occurrences, nearly half, are here in Hebrews.

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The first occurrence of this word in Hebrews is here in 3:1. The other two are 4:14 and 10:23. In both of these latter two cases, “our confession” is the thing that we are urged to “hold fast.”

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This tells us something about the meaning of the word: that it is important, the most important thing, the thing that we all need to hold fast.

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Clearly, from what we have already seen in the first two chapters of Hebrews, and as we shall continue to see throughout the whole document, the author of Hebrews is mainly working to keep a group of believers from neglecting and drifting away from that which they first believed. He is working hard to help them “hold fast” to their confession.

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Notice there is no mention of the confession having changed.

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Whatever their confession is, it has been the same since they were baptized into the church.

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This word, “homologia,” here translated “confession” which appears three times in Hebrews also appears three times in 1 Timothy (3:16, 6:12, 6:13), where the range of possible meanings is seen more fully.

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In 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul quotes an established homologia (confession), probably one of the confessions recited or sung by those who were being baptized into the church and/or those who baptized them .

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You can turn there and read along with me if you like, but it is short and goes like this:

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**“He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”**

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In a few words this makes it clear that our confession must include the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, his life, death, resurrection, and ascension as the glorified Lord of all the nations.

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Just quietly believing these things about Jesus is not enough, Paul knows.

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In 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul urges Timothy to **“fight the good fight of faith,”** to **“take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

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This may refer to Timothy’s baptismal confession "in the presence of many witnesses" and the works of obedience that Paul expects to flow from it.

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Notice that Paul is encouraging Timothy in much the same way that the author of Hebrews is encouraging his listeners and as we should all encourage one another.

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One thinks of Paul's admonition to the Ephesians, to "live a life worth of the calling they have received."

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Then in 1 Timothy 6:13 Paul speaks of **“Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,”**

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This “good confession” that Timothy has made publicly is the same good confession that Jesus made in his testimony before Pilate, which led to his crucifixion.

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So we see that not only must we sometimes make our good confession publicly but also, then, fight the fight of faith and take hold of the eternal life of which we were called, and then sometimes follow Christ into suffering and even death.

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Because as Jesus taught, no student is greater than his teacher.

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The action that follows our confession may not always be death or even physical suffering but it will always cost us something.

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The final use of the word “homologia” in the New Testament is in 2 Corinthians 9:13 where Paul, speaking of the collection for Christians in Jerusalem, says to the Corinthians that the saints in Jerusalem will “glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others.

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Again we see similarities in the encouragement being offered by Paul, this time to the Corinthian churches, and the encouragement being offered by the author of Hebrews.

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And again we see continued action as the measure of the reality of the confession of faith.

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Here Paul expressly describes the **content** of the confession of the Corinthian churches as the **“gospel of Christ.”**

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It seems that for Christians what we confess is inseparable from who we confess and how we confess him.

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Indeed what we confess is who we confess and who we confess is essentially how we confess him.

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It all centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ, how we obey him and walk in his footsteps.

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That is probably why, naturally enough, the citizens in Antioch first started calling us “Christians” (Acts 11:26).

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We have now examined all of the occurrences of the word homologia (confession) in the New Testament.

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Before we leave this word study, however, let's look at several of the uses of the related verb which is translated into English as "confess"

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We think of the Paul's statement in Romans 10:9 that: "...if you **confess** with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

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That passage goes on, in verse 10, to say: "For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

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Surely this is not two separate things but, rather, an observation that a heart that truly believes and a mouth that sincerely confesses are never seen separately.

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1 John 4:3; "and every spirit that does **not** confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already."

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Our confession is essentially boiled down to a confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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Philippians 2:9-11 reads: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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We begin to see that we cannot bypass Christ and get to God, because God has ordained otherwise.

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Because Christ and God are one!

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There is also the concept that when we confess Jesus in the world, that he confesses us in heaven:

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Matthew 10:32, 33 reads: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (here the ESV prefers the the translation "acknowledge" but the underlying Greek word "homologia" is the same)

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Luke 12:8,9 is very similar, except that it mentions angels. It reads: "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

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Finally Revelation 3:5 combines the thoughts of the passages just cited from Matthew and Luke and puts them in the mouth of Jesus: The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. **I** will **confess** his name before my Father and before his angels.

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Surely then, we have a reason to consider Jesus.

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He is the essential content of our confession.

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He is the one who saves us, the one whom we confess.

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 The one whom we obey. The one we imitate.

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 But this one whom we confess, Jesus, the content of our confession is also said to be the **apostle** and **high priest** of our confession.

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 How shall we understand that?

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***n.b. we're still in Verse 1 but nearly finished with it now!!***

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 An **apostle** is one who is sent out as a representative and spokesman of the one who sends him.

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 Jesus is the preeminent apostle of God.

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 This thought has been before us since the first verse of Chapter 1,

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 Where we read that long ago God spoke to the fathers in various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a son.

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 Jesus is the ultimate representative, spokesman, prophet, and teacher of God's word to man.

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 But that is not all Jesus is.

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 He is also the one who represents Man to God, our intercessor, redeemer, sanctifier, head, and so forth.

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 In all of these ways, and more, Jesus is like a **priest**.

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 Our author began to develop these ideas of Jesus' priesthood early in Chapter One where he spoke of Jesus making purification for our sins.

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 The concept of Jesus' priestly offices were more fully developed near the end of Chapter 2, especially in verse 17, where Jesus is called "...a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God.."

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 Please notice that these are just metaphors used to help us grasp the grace and beauty of the one whom we confess, Jesus our lord and savior.

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 It would be wrong to pull him down to the level of the figure of speech we are using.

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 But it would also be wrong to fail to see how our God and King, Jesus, is also the apostle and high priest appointed by God for Man!

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 That is part of what he was and is.

## Verse 2

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

We know how obedient Jesus was to God and how faithful to God and to Man, in fulfilling these offices.

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It was because God sent him and because he was faithful to God that we can trust Jesus.

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Although Jesus is much more than an apostle and priest of God, he is preeminently both of those things.

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Was there every another person who was both apostle and priest?

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It is rare in the Old Testament, but not unheard of, and the preeminent example was, of course, Moses.

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Moses was neither God nor the Son of God, nor is he our Lord or Saviour etc. but like the Son of God Moses was appointed to act for a time as both an apostle and priest of God.

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His apostolic function is clearly seen by how he became the voice of God to the people of Israel.

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He spoke for God to the people and he taught the people to understand God's speech and he judged the people in accordance with God's words and he led the people in accordance with God's words and in many other ways besides, Moses was the apostle of God to the people of Israel in the time of the exodus from Egypt.

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While his brother Aaron was officially appointed High Priest, and his sons after him, by the word of God,

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It was only Moses who successfully and faithfully interceded for the people with God, turning his wrath aside. It was for Moses sake that Israel was spared.

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So Moses was faithful to God, both as a priest and as an apostle.

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He was renowned for this faithfulness and even God Himself exalted Moses for his unique faithfulness in all of God's house.

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Here (in verse 2) the author is clearly alluding to Numbers 12:7 where, in defending Moses against Aaron and Miriam, YHVH says that his servant Moses is faithful in all God's house.

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So the infinitely greater and indeed perfect faithfulness of Christ can somehow be imagined by its reflection in the life and work of Moses, which was very great in all God's house, but also very imperfect in comparison to Christ, as we know if we have been reading our Old Testament.

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The words and thoughts of Numbers 12 are at the back of our author's mind now, throughout the remainder of today's reading as is the metaphor of Moses, as a faithful servant in all of

God's house and a range of metaphors related to houses: builder, household, servant, and son.

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The author works with these figures in various ways from verse 2 to verse 6, in order to help us "consider Jesus."

### **Verse 3**

**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.**

The central truth conveyed in verse 3 is that Moses can be used as a metaphor --- type or figure --- to help convey a part of the glory of Jesus, but the two are not in the same category.

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Just as a beautiful house may bring glory to its architect and builder, Moses may bring glory to Christ. But there is finally no way to compare the house with the builder. Likewise there is finally no way to compare Moses with Jesus. They are in different categories.

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But surely if you are willing to give glory to a house, you should be willing to give glory to the one who built it.

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It is worth noticing that a builder precedes a building, both chronologically and logically, and never the reverse.

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We are therefore at least to understand from this figure of speech that Christ precedes Moses logically, but also in a sense chronologically.

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The promises which God made to the fathers and which were finally fulfilled in Christ were made long before Moses was a baby in a basket floating on the Nile!

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Without Christ there would be no point to Moses.

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Before Abraham was I am.

### **Verse 4**

**(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)**

Verse 4 makes the point more general: every house is built by somebody,

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but it is also true that every thing is made by somebody

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and ultimately all things and all makers are made by God.

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So whatever there is brings glory to God who is the builder of all things.

### **Verse 5**

**Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later**

Verse 5 returns to the passage from Numbers 12 which styles Moses as the faithful servant in all God's house.

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How big the house is here is hard to say.

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In view of the expansiveness of verse 4, we might say that the house is all creation.

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I tend to think so, since the angels who come from heaven are understood to be involved in the transmission and administration of laws proclaimed through Moses and these same angels are understood to be ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.

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However a less expansive definition of House is also imaginable. In its original context Numbers 12 could be read to include only Israel, for example.

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Other ideas are also possible. We might, for example, read God's house as the Church.

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However big you understand God's house to be, Moses is a servant in it.

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And in Numbers 12 this is only a compliment.

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To be the servant of YHVH is a very high honor and few have deserved it more than Moses as YHVH himself attests!

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Moses was an apostle and a priest and more, really, a kind of lord and savior of his people, during the Exodus generation, a fragmentary and preliminary and imperfect figure of Christ and so very great indeed.

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But the one task performed by Moses which is considered here in verse 5, is that Moses would testify to the things that were to be spoken later.

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Again we are left with a range of possible meanings.

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At least this means what we read in the Old Testament: that Moses went up to God and received the testimony of God which was spoken to the people later.

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This surely means more than just the 10 commandments but the entire book of the covenant and probably also the whole Torah (Pentateuch) and maybe more besides.

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We as Christians understand, as Jesus and his Apostles have taught us, that the Law and the Prophets bear witness to Jesus, who is the final Word that was spoken later. Perhaps that is in view.

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Certainly that thought has been in view since Hebrews 1:1

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In all these things, big and small, Moses was faithful in all God's house, more faithful than anyone else in God's house, maybe, but still, Moses was in the house, part of the household.

**Verse 6**

**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.**

But Christ was perfectly faithful. And not just as part of the house but as the head of the household. The son of God rules over God's house.

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And we, like Moses, are part of God's house.

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This presupposes, of course, that we hold fast to our confession, which is the preacher's interest throughout.

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How will we know that we do, indeed, hold fast? That we are saved?

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This will be seen, by others and also by ourselves, by our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

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What we believe will be proven by what we say and what we do.

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The congregation that first heard this sermon started with a good confession and a victorious witness amidst suffering and persecution.

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Now that things are easier, the preacher is concerned that they may not hold fast to their confession.

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This naturally leads to a comparison between Christians who are led and served by Christ and those whom Moses led and served in days of old.

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That will be next week's lesson.