

"This is my beloved son, listen to him"

Heb 3:1-6 - Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession; he was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a son over His house-whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

The Hebrews writer compared Moses with Jesus. What is the difference between the two? Who is Jesus, really? Let's make two attempts - with one returning to the Trinitarian concept to see this passage. Who was Jesus? He was God. Proof as follows: V3 starts with this, '*... he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.*' It is very clear from this sentence that Moses was the house while Jesus was the one who built the house, was it not? Then, v4 says, '*For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.*' See the word 'God' here? Therefore, 'Jesus is God', agree? So, it is a case of 'every road leads to Rome' that the Bible is up to each one's own interpretation, is it not? We must think through when studying the Bible and not to follow the crowd. This is a simple demonstration and we can see how easily we focus on one particular verse. Once we zero-in on a particular verse, we would start to get confused.

Do we know what kind of identity that this passage wants to tell us about Jesus? Where does the difference between Jesus and Moses lie? We have to pay attention to the context and not only on a particular verse. Obviously, it wants to say here that the difference between Moses and Jesus is that one was a servant while the other, a son.

What is common between the two then? V2 says, '*He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.*' They were both appointed (v1), and both were faithful. Moreover, note '*to Him who appointed him*', who appointed him? It was the God who built all things.

We must read the whole context. In fact, v4 is very simple, it just meant to profile the noble identity of Jesus - he was the Son of God, who was far more worthy of glory than Moses, just as how the builder of the house is nobler than the house itself. The Hebrews writer did not say that Jesus was God; rather, he said that he was worthy of more glory than Moses. Do not forget that the writer was reminding us - '*but the builder of all things is God*' - that everything is from God; and both Moses and Jesus were appointed by God.

Such then, what is the emphasis for highlighting the difference between the son and the servant? The emphasis is on the difference between Moses' relationship with God and that of Jesus with God, Jesus' relationship with God was closer, like that of the father and son. Jesus Christ was managing God's house as a son. That is why we must read the context so as to understand the truth that the whole picture wants to portray when reading the Bible.

Regarding Moses, let us first look at some of his characteristics.

Deut 34:10 - Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

The emphasis here is on Moses' relationship with Yahweh being very extraordinary; he was one whom God knew face to face. This was the outstanding part of Moses.

Exo 7:1 - Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.

Who was Moses? He was speaking to Pharaoh in place of Yahweh. What does it mean? To put it more plainly, he was just like God. Aaron became his prophet and spoke on his behalf.

To be made '*as God*' is to have the full authority to deal with Pharaoh on behalf of God and Aaron became Moses' spokesman. We can see how extraordinary Moses' status was.

The first part of *Exo 7:2* says, '*You shall speak all that I command you ...*'

Moses became God's spokesman; all that God commanded, he would speak. This was what Jesus did and he repeatedly emphasized this point in John: what God wanted him to speak, he would speak without delay, so what he said was what God said; he was God's spokesman.

Deut 18:15 - The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Moses told a prophecy here. He said, "*Yahweh your God would raise up a prophet like me from among you*", and he asked that the Israelites to "*listen to him*". Notice that Moses addressed himself as prophet, "*a prophet like me*" - a prophet just as me; and this prophet who was to come would be raised up from among the brothers - he is a man. Moreover, Moses urged the Israelites again, '*you shall listen to him*". It was because Yahweh spoke to His people through him and Yahweh would also ask us to obey him absolutely because he was Yahweh's authorized representative.

Who was this prophet? Let us see what *Ac 3:22-23* says.

Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall give heed to everything he says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

The apostles cited the verse that we saw just now, saying, "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you ...*". "*me*" referred to Moses, then who was the prophet? Let's read v26.

"For you first, God raised up His servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

V26 tells us that God raised up His servant. Who was that servant? It was Jesus Christ. God commanded that we listen to him. V23 tells us, "... every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." This is a bit similar to what John said in Jn 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Hence, that was the apostles' understanding of what Moses said. Such a prophecy of Moses was fulfilled in Jesus. This prophet who was to come was Jesus. The most similar characteristic he shared with Moses lied in his very special relationship with God. His relationship with God was in fact even closer than Moses' with God because Yahweh God was dwelling within Jesus, speaking and acting through him.

Mt 17:5 - While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to him!"

I hope you can understand the meaning of this verse now. Without the Old Testament background, there is no way you can understand the meaning of this verse. "This is My beloved son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to him!" Why did it have to emphasize this point?

Hebrews said that Jesus was ruling God's house as the Son of God and this is testified by God Himself, "This is my beloved son". Why the emphasis on "beloved son"? That is a no-brainer! It's talking about the relationship - this is my beloved son! The word "beloved" is to tell us that his relationship with God was not an ordinary one; you must listen to him, just as how the Israelites had to listen to Moses.

We saw from the Old Testament just now that God was speaking with Moses face to face, which was a form of close relationship. What about Jesus? John said that Yahweh God dwelt within Jesus. Jesus did not only teach and preach God's words, but he also manifested Yahweh God. That was where Jesus was different from Moses, that's why his glory was greater than that of Moses.

In the same way, this also reminds Christians of our mission on earth. Our responsibility is not merely evangelism, but more so, we have to imitate Christ to let God's Spirit dwell within us and lead us to live out the image and glory of God. No matter how beautiful your preaching sounds, it would not attract anyone to go before God unless your lives can manifest the glory of God. This was Jesus' mission on earth, it is also ours.

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