

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 3:1-2

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we are going to read Hebrews Chapter 3, and today we will read verses 1-2.

The Israelites in the Old Testament were God's chosen people, and they always took pride in their unique identity, especially in the three privileges they enjoyed as God's people: the protection of angels, the provision of great leaders from God, and the ministry of the high priest. The author of Hebrews cites Old Testament scriptures and events to prove that Jesus Christ is far superior.

In chapters 1 and 2, the author explains that as the Son of God, Christ is superior to angels in name, identity, position, existence, and victory. As the Son of Man, although He was made a little lower than the angels for a time, it was precisely because of this humbling that Christ could fulfill God's eternal purpose, becoming the Captain of Salvation and bringing many sons to glory. Thus, even as the Son of Man, Christ is still superior to angels.

When it comes to chapter 3, the focus shifts to the second privilege that the Israelites were proud of: the great leaders God gave them. Among the many instruments God raised in the Old Testament, Moses was undoubtedly the most unique and revered leader among the Israelites. Therefore, the author of Hebrews seeks to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is superior to Moses.

Verse 1: "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus."

First, at the beginning of this verse, there is a word that the Chinese Union Version did not translate, which is "therefore." This indicates that the argument in the first two chapters about Christ's superiority to angels leads to the statement here:

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." This is how the Hebrew saints are addressed.

The KJV and ASV use two appositions to refer to the Hebrew saints: "holy brethren" and "partakers of the heavenly calling." This reminds the Hebrew saints that, having read the first two chapters, they should recognize their unique identity. Broadly speaking, we are also "Hebrews" because we have "crossed the river," so this is also a reminder for us. We have two identities:

1. Partakers of the Heavenly Calling

Although we still live on earth and have many things that occupy and concern us, we have received a calling from heaven. We are pilgrims on the heavenly path, called to inherit this glorious calling and to follow the Captain of our Salvation into glory. Once we recognize that we are called to enter heavenly glory, we should not be entangled by earthly matters. As Paul reminds us in Colossians 3:2, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." We are walking an upward path, and thus we must lay aside every weight to faithfully complete the journey, ultimately reaching glory.

2. Holy Brethren

The term "holy" originally means "separate unto God." It signifies being set apart for God, not that we have reached sinless perfection. It calls us to separate ourselves from worldly matters and dedicate ourselves to God. "Brethren" emphasizes the life relationship among believers. We have been called to run the heavenly race together and to enter glory as one. Along the way, we support one another and encourage one another. On one hand, we receive God's supply of life, and on the other, we separate ourselves from the distractions of the world to fix our gaze solely on God, ultimately being wholly consecrated to Him.

The verse continues: "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus." The original text uses an imperative mood, commanding us to consider Jesus. Jesus is the Captain of our Salvation. On one hand, we follow His steps, and on the other, we are called to contemplate Him. This means our following is not blind but

is a thoughtful and reasoned decision. The more we consider Jesus, the more we discover His goodness and worth, which strengthens our faith and resolve to follow Him all our lives.

The verse specifically highlights two roles of Jesus that we acknowledge: He is the Apostle and the High Priest. The Greek word for "Apostle" is Apostolos. The basic meaning is "the sent one." The Chinese Union Version translates it as "messenger," but this is not a very precise translation, as angels, discussed in chapter 1, are also often called messengers. However, angels are ministering spirits sent by God to serve those who will inherit salvation. The function of angels is entirely different from that of apostles. Therefore, translating it directly as "apostle" may be more accurate.

Moses was the first apostle in the Old Testament. He was sent by God to lead the Israelites, who were enslaved in Egypt, out of their bondage. Jesus is the first apostle in the New Testament. He was sent by God from heaven to earth to save humanity enslaved by sin, starting with the Israelites and then extending to all nations. The author deliberately uses the term "apostle" to draw a connection between Moses and Jesus and then demonstrates that Jesus is superior to Moses.

An apostle is sent by God to lead God's people so they may know Him, whereas the high priest leads the people in offering sacrifices to God, removing barriers, and bringing people into God's presence. The first high priest among the Israelites in the Old Testament was Aaron. Jesus, however, is the high priest of the New Testament. The author subtly introduces this dual role of Jesus—as Apostle and High Priest—inviting readers to consider both Moses and Aaron. After proving that Jesus as an Apostle is superior to Moses, the author goes on to show that as High Priest, Jesus is also superior to Aaron. The author deeply understands that Hebrew saints often clung to the proud traditions of the Old Testament, which led them to overlook the great salvation brought about through Jesus in the New Testament.

In the eyes of the Israelites, the three most esteemed offices were prophet, king, and priest. In Hebrews 1:1–3, the author first points out that in the New Testament, it is the Son of God Himself who speaks to the saints, and His office far surpasses

that of the prophets in the Old Testament. Prophets spoke to the forefathers of Israel in many ways and at various times, but Jesus Christ's role is more direct and complete. Apostles are sent by God to lead His people, a role akin to that of a king. In this capacity, Jesus also surpasses Moses. Finally, in the priestly office, Jesus surpasses Aaron, the high priest.

Verse 2: "Who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house."

From verses 2 to 6, the focus shifts to the comparison between Moses and Jesus Christ. Both Moses and Jesus were sent by God to His people. They were both appointed by God, and Jesus was faithful to Him who appointed Him. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly emphasizes that He was sent by the Father to His people. In John 11, when Jesus raised Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, from the tomb, He prayed to the Father in the presence of the crowd, saying, "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me" (John 11:42). Everything Jesus said and did place the Father first, calling people to believe that He was sent by the Father.

From the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus faced persecution from scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, yet He faithfully carried out the Father's mission, even to the point of death on the cross. He exemplifies faithfulness as an Apostle of God. Similarly, Moses was faithful in all God's house. He was sent by God to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh's oppression, yet he was often misunderstood by the Israelites, even by his own brother and sister. This led God to personally affirm Moses to Aaron and Miriam.

In Numbers 12:7–8, God says, "Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" Moses' faithfulness in all God's house is drawn from this affirmation by God to Aaron and Miriam, where God gives Moses the highest praise.

Before proving that Jesus is superior to Moses, the author of Hebrews highlights their similarities. Both were apostles of God, sent by Him, appointed to save His people, and faithful to God's commission. Most importantly, they both served in God's house.

In Hebrews 3:1–6, the words "house" or "household" (Greek: oikos) appear seven times in the Chinese Union Version, all translated into English as "house." This emphasis on the house is unique and touches upon God's heart. Typically, when Moses is mentioned, most people immediately associate him with the law. However, the author of Hebrews emphasizes that the "house" is more important. Moses' greatest accomplishment was not delivering the law, as Romans 5:20 tells us, "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound." The law was an addition, not part of God's original intent, but a response to humanity's sin and fall. Moses' greatest achievement was building the tabernacle, providing God a dwelling place on earth so that He could live among His people.

The author of Hebrews uses the concept of the house to compare Moses' ministry in constructing the tabernacle with Christ's ministry in building the church. Both were building God's house—Moses as a servant faithful in God's house, and Christ as a Son over His own house.

The detailed comparisons will be explored tomorrow. Today, I hope the saints will remember the significance of God's house. We know the church is God's house and often say so, but we must avoid speaking without understanding. If we truly recognize that the church is God's house—a place of His presence and where the Holy Spirit reigns—how could we neglect it? How could we dare to be absent, arrive late, or act irreverently in God's house? How could we criticize or judge our fellow family members in God's house?

May we cherish every brother and sister around us, for each one is redeemed by Christ's precious blood, each one is the beloved of the Heavenly Father, and each one is our sibling and family member.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, help us to truly understand Your house and see that the church is central to Your eternal purpose. You are the head of the church, and

the church is Your body. Every saint in the church is a member of Your body and our family. Bless my local church, filling it with love among brothers and sisters. May those who seek You, when they come to the church, say, "Surely God is among you." May the church be a beautiful testimony. I pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.