

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

Hebrews 3: 3-6

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord it's time to read the Bible again. Today, we will continue reading Hebrews chapter 3, verses 3 through 6.

Yesterday, we studied the term "apostle." We defined an apostle as one sent by God to lead God's people and fulfill His commission. This is a broad definition of an apostle. From this perspective, Moses is the first apostle of the Old Testament, sent by God to Egypt to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh's oppression. Similarly, Jesus is the first apostle of the New Testament, sent by God to earth to save humanity from the bondage of sin. As apostles, both Moses and Jesus were sent and appointed by God to carry out the mission of salvation, and they both faithfully fulfilled their duties.

The Book of Hebrews emphasizes that both Moses and Jesus served faithfully in God's house. The word "house" appears seven times from verses 2 to 6. The term "house" has two aspects: one is material, referring to the physical structure where people dwell; the other is relational and substantive, referring to the members of the household. Therefore, the Chinese Union Version translates the term differently depending on the context—sometimes as "house" and sometimes as "household." However, the Greek word *oikos* is used consistently, and in English, it is translated as "house." The Greek word *oikos* can mean both a physical house and the members of a household. In the New Testament, God's house refers to the church. Similarly, the term "church" can refer to a building or to the believers within the church. The author of Hebrews focuses on the relational and substantive aspects of the house, but to make the concept easier to understand, he starts with the material aspect, which is why the Chinese Union Version translates it as "house."

Verse 3: "For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house."

Christ is considered worthy of more glory than Moses. This is not a comparison of good versus bad, as both Christ and Moses faithfully carried out the mission entrusted to them by God. Thus, both are good. However, this is a comparison of who is more deserving of glory. True glory is the manifestation of God.

In Exodus 34, when Moses spent forty days and nights with God on Mount Sinai, God's glory was reflected on Moses' face. Verses 34: 29–30 state: "Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So, when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him."

The radiance on Moses' face was passive, reflecting God's glory. As verse 35 further explains, the Israelites were afraid to look at Moses' shining face, so Moses covered his face with a veil. Moses would commune with God with an unveiled face, but upon returning to the people, he would cover his face.

In the New Testament, Paul offers an explanation of Moses' glory in 2 Corinthians 3:7: "But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away." Moses' radiance was a reflection of God's glory, and it was temporary, fading over time. In 2 Corinthians 3:13, Paul elaborates: "Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away." Moses used a veil to prevent the Israelites from seeing the fading glory on his face.

Actually, this remains true for us today. If we spend time before God with unveiled faces—whether reading the Scriptures, praying, or communing with Him—our faces will also reflect the glory of God. However, this glory will quickly fade.

Therefore, we must set aside time each day to come before God and fellowship with Him so that we may continually remain in the light.

Jesus, however, is different. In John 1:14, it says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus, as God's only begotten Son, inherently possesses God's glory. When Jesus carried out His mission on earth, His glory was veiled by His human body.

However, John testifies that he had witnessed the glory of the only begotten Son. When did this occur? In Matthew 17:1–2, it says, "Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light." On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus revealed His glory to the disciples. Unlike Moses, Jesus' glory emanated from within and was enduring. While on earth, Jesus' divine glory was concealed by His physical body, appearing ordinary outwardly. But when His body was broken on the cross and He rose from the dead, His glory as the Son of God was fully revealed.

As the Son of God, Christ's glory inherently surpasses Moses'. The author of Hebrews also evaluates this from another perspective: "He who built the house has more honor than the house." Glory is intrinsic, while honor is bestowed by others. A magnificent house earns honor for its splendor, but the builder of the house is worthy of even greater honor. Here, Moses is likened to the house, while Jesus is likened to the builder. In other words, Moses is a part of God's household, while Jesus is the one who builds God's household. Naturally, Jesus is more honorable than Moses.

In the New Testament, every believer in the church is a part of God's household, while Christ is the builder of the church. Throughout history, no matter how spiritual or accomplished a saint may be—whether leading many to salvation or establishing great ministries—they remain part of God's household and cannot compare to the builder of the household. Therefore, in the church, we must not exalt any person above Christ. Paul understood this clearly, stating that the church

is the body of Christ and that Christ is the head, while believers are members of the body. Every member must obey and submit to the head and should never elevate themselves above the head.

Christ is the builder of the church. Yet in His grace and mercy, He allows believers to participate in the ministry of building the church. What a privilege this is! Paul states in 1 Corinthians 3:10, "According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it." Christ is the only foundation, which Paul has already laid. Each of us participates in the ministry of building, and our lives constitute this construction project. It depends on what materials we use—wood, hay, and straw will result in loss, though the builder himself will be saved; gold, silver, and precious stones will bring rewards. Here, the emphasis is on each person's responsibility, determined by the materials they choose to use.

In Ephesians 4:15–16, Paul writes, "but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." These verses emphasize the role of Christ as the head, the cooperation of the members, and their mutual support in building up the body. We must have a correct understanding of the church: Christ is the builder, and we are His workmanship. However, we can choose the materials we use in building. When everyone submits to Christ's leadership, the entire body is joined and knit together, functioning as it should, and building itself up in love. Naturally, the builder is far more glorious and honorable than the building.

Verse 4: "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God."

Common sense tells us that a house cannot exist by itself; it must be built by someone. The universe, being far more complex than a house, exists harmoniously and operates with precision. Is this not evidence of a designer and builder? The verse continues to affirm that He who built all things is God. Hebrews 1:2–3

provides greater clarity, teaching that God's Son created the worlds in the past, upholds all things by His powerful word in the present, and will inherit all things in the future. Therefore, Christ, as the Creator of all things, is naturally more honorable than Moses, who was created.

The author's intention here is to emphasize, from the perspective of creation, that Christ surpasses Moses. This was evident to the Hebrew believers, as it is to us today, requiring no extensive explanation. However, this verse also highlights the absurdity of evolutionary theories held by some today. We must understand that genetic mutations are a method God uses to enable created beings to adapt to environmental changes for survival. This was predetermined and encoded within their genetic sequence. When examining any creature's genome, we find numerous genes whose functions are currently unknown but were purposefully included by God. These genes manifest their roles only under specific environmental stimuli.

Some arrogant and ignorant scientists, upon discovering instances of genetic mutation, extrapolate their findings excessively and propose evolution as an explanation for the origin of species. In reality, their theories can only account for changes organisms undergo in response to environmental conditions over a given period. They fail to recognize that this very process is God's way of enhancing species' resilience to environmental changes. Without this divine mechanism, many species would have long since become extinct.

Verse 4 introduces a straightforward common-sense principle: the existence of a house implies the existence of a builder. The human body is far more complex than a house. The coordination of its limbs, the functions of its organs, and the balance of trace substances in blood circulation are all intricately designed. How could such complexity exist without a Creator? Similarly, the universe, with its even greater complexity and precision, cannot exist without a Creator.

The denial of a Creator reveals a fatal flaw in human reasoning: pride and arrogance. When humans encounter comprehensible phenomena, they apply rational thought and debate to arrive at reasonable conclusions. However, when faced with the incomprehensible, they often resort to arbitrary and even blind adherence to

dubious theories. The Bible straightforwardly reveals truths that resonate with the innate common sense within human hearts. For example, Romans 1:20 states, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." If one humbles oneself, they can discern God's wisdom in the intricacy and ingenuity of creation. If one is pure in heart, as Matthew 5:8 promises, they will see God.

The author of Hebrews contrasts Christ with Moses to demonstrate that Christ deserves greater glory and honor. Verse 3 compares the builder to the house, while verse 4 contrasts the Creator with the created. Verses 5 and 6 go on to compare their respective roles and statuses within God's house. Moses is a servant, faithfully fulfilling his duties in God's house, while Christ is a Son, managing God's household.

Verse 5: "And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,"

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were God's chosen people, and Moses served as a faithful servant in God's house. The Greek term for "servant" used here, *therapon*, is unique to this verse in the New Testament. It refers to a willing servant, akin to a friend voluntarily choosing to serve. By using this term, the author gives Moses the highest commendation.

Other common terms for "servant" in the New Testament include *doulos* and *diakonos*. For example, in Philippians 1:1, Paul refers to himself as a servant of Christ Jesus. The Greek word *doulos* means "bond slave," signifying one wholly owned by their master, with no autonomy and whose life and death are at the master's discretion. This term appears 126 times in the New Testament and reflects complete submission to the master.

Another commonly used term, *diakonos*, is found in 2 Corinthians 3:6, referring to ministers of the new covenant. The Greek word *diakonos* originally means "servant" and appears 29 times in the New Testament. It denotes someone serving

others according to God's will and mission, often translated as "minister" in English. These individuals are bound by God's purpose and calling.

Moses's service as a servant in God's house, as described by the unique term *therapon*, reflects his voluntary and wholehearted devotion to God. Unlike a slave or servant bound by obligation, Moses served out of love for God, choosing to remain in God's house and faithfully fulfill his duties. His service testified to things that would be spoken of in the future, foreshadowing the New Testament. Moses's faithfulness prefigures Christ's service to the church. Just as Moses served out of love, Christ served in even greater love, sacrificing Himself for the church, thereby testifying to Moses's witness of Him.

As early as 1,500 years before the New Testament, Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear." This prophet referred to Jesus Christ. When Christ came and was rejected by the Jews, He said to them in John 5:39-40, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." Jesus pointed out that their study of Scripture was in vain.

To truly understand Scripture, one must see Christ within it, for the Bible testifies of Him. Without faith in Jesus Christ, one cannot comprehend the Bible. Particularly when reading the Old Testament, one must adopt a New Testament perspective to uncover its testimony of Christ. Only then can Christ impart life and supply, making the Old Testament an extension and application of New Testament truths.

Verse 6: "but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end."

Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, while Christ, as the Son, governs God's house. In the New Testament, this house refers to the church. While elders, deacons, and full-time workers may seem to manage the church, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is its true ruler. The church's sovereignty rests in Christ's hands, and all

its members, including leaders, are servants entrusted with ministering to God's house according to His will.

A healthy church involves all believers actively serving and sharing responsibilities under the Lord's guidance. The authority to govern the church belongs to Christ alone. If we hold fast to our confidence and hope to the end, we truly become His house. The NKJV rendering clarifies the meaning: "We hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." This emphasizes the need to grasp and steadfastly proclaim our hope.

What is our hope? It is that Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, will lead many sons to glory. This hope demands not only belief but also full assurance and joyful proclamation. Assurance pertains to oneself, while joyful proclamation is directed toward others. When the saints in a church are filled with this hope and encourage one another with it, the church becomes a place of joy and harmony. Such a church is truly God's house, characterized by God's presence, Christ's authority, and the Holy Spirit's guidance—a resting place for the Triune God.

Dear brothers and sisters, Christ is superior to Moses because Christ builds God's house, while Moses is merely a member of it. Christ is the Creator of all things; Moses is a created being. Christ is the Son who governs God's house, while Moses is a servant faithfully serving in it. Our identity and position are the same as Moses's—we are all members of God's household. If we hold fast to our hope, with full assurance and joyful proclamation, we can truly become God's house.

Let us pray together: Lord, help us recognize that the church is God's house and that Christ is its builder. In Your mercy, grant us the privilege of participating in the building of the church—a high calling indeed. Teach us to build carefully, using gold, silver, and precious stones rather than wood, hay, and straw. May the church be filled with brothers and sisters loving one another and sharing a glorious hope for the future, truly becoming God's house. Bless the church I belong to. In Jesus Christ's name, I pray.