

The Builder of the House

Heb 3:1-6; Matt 7:24-29
SS Lesson for 10/09/2016

Devotional Scripture: 2 Cor 5:1-9

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines God's Divine plan for Jesus to be **The Builder of the House**. The **study's aim** is to understand Jesus' role in building of His kingdom. The **study's application** is to grow in confidence in following Jesus and to submit and allow Him to build our lives.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Heb 3:4

For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The writer paused again in the course of his exposition to introduce the second warning section. This one is far more extensive and detailed than the brief one in 2:1-4. The real nature of his anxiety for his readers becomes clearer here, as well as the incalculable loss which they faced if they did not attend to his exhortation. The basic text for this section is Psalm 95:7-11 which he quoted (Heb. 3:7-11) and expounded in the remainder of chapter 3 and in 4:1-11. The section closes with a reminder of the judgmental power of God's Word (4:12-13) and with a call to seek the help available through the great High Priest (4:14-16).

3:1. The readers were now addressed as **holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling**. This form of address gathered up the strands of truth which the author dealt with in chapter 2. They were indeed "brothers" (cf. 3:12; 10:19), not only with one another but with their Captain (2:11-12), and they were "holy" because He had made them so (2:11). They did "share in the heavenly calling" because God was "bringing" them "to glory" (2:10). The words "who share" are rendered "companions" in 1:9 (*metochoi*; this Greek word is also used in this epistle in 3:14; 6:4; 12:8). The author was thinking especially of their high privilege of being invited to participate in the future dominion and joy of God's King-Son. It was as such people that they were to focus their thinking on the One who is both **the Apostle and High Priest** of their Christian profession. The first of these titles probably points to the Lord Jesus as the One sent forth by God as the supreme Revealer of the Father (cf. 1:1-2), while the second picks up the role just mentioned in 2:17-18.

3:2. The NIV disjoins this verse from the previous one by making it a separate sentence. But connecting it as in the original with verse 1, the statement may read: "Contemplate Jesus... being faithful to the One who appointed Him." Taken in this way, the readers are urged to fix their gaze on the person of Christ who is even now **faithful** to God. Thus they would find a model for their own fidelity. The faithfulness of Christ, moreover, has an Old Testament prototype in Moses. The reference to **Moses being faithful in all God's house** was drawn from Numbers 12:7 in which the tabernacle furnished the backdrop. Hence God's "house" in the Old Testament situation would be the tabernacle itself which Moses had constructed in strict obedience to the divine directions. It was a prophetic testimony "to what would be said in the future" (Heb. 3:5).

3:3-6a. But **Jesus** as a **Builder** excels **Moses** in **honor** since Moses was simply a servant carrying out instructions. But what Jesus has built is, in fact, **everything**, for **God is the Builder** of "everything." Implicit here is the Son's role in Creation (cf. 1:2, 10) and indeed His identification as God (cf. 1:8). But beyond this is the thought that **God's house** in which **Moses was faithful** was a kind of miniature representation of "everything," that is, of the greater **house** over which the Son presides at God's right hand in heaven (cf. 1:3 with 4:14). The "holy of holies" in **His** earthly **house** was but a shadow of heaven itself where Christ has now gone "to appear for us in God's presence" (9:24). Moses' fidelity consisted in erecting that shadow house, the tabernacle, so that it could properly prefigure the future order of priestly activity which now has the universe itself as its proper sphere. This is the sphere where the exalted **Christ**

sits **faithful** in all His current ministrations as well as past ones, functioning **as a Son over God's house** (3:6a).

3:6b. By a natural semantic shift to which the Greek word for **house** naturally lends itself, the writer moved from the thought of the house as the sphere where priestly activities transpired to the thought of the "house" as consisting of the people who engaged in these activities. His readers, he affirmed, comprise **His** (the Son's) "house" contingent, however, on one important consideration: **if they hold on to their courage** (*parrēsian*, used four times in Heb., here and in 4:16; 10:19, 35) **and the hope of which they boast.** As in the earlier warning passage (2:1-4), the writer used "we" and thus included himself within the scope of his admonition. As he will shortly state (3:12), he was concerned that there might be in some of his Christian "brothers" an "unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God." Should any of his readers do this, they would forfeit their roles in the Son's priestly house, which is only maintained by holding firmly to their Christian profession (cf. also v. 14 and 10:23-25, 35-36). The author did not mean, of course, that his readers could forfeit their eternal salvation; it is an error to identify the word "house" with the body of Christ, the true universal church. As the context and the Old Testament background show, the author was thinking in priestly terms. He was also thinking functionally. The exalted Son presides over a priestly apparatus which is an operative reality. As long as the readership held firmly to their Christian commitment, they also functioned within this priestly arrangement. But just as one who was a true Levite by birth could withdraw from participation in the tabernacle of Moses' day, so too one who is truly a Christian by new birth may withdraw from his priestly role within the functioning household. It was precisely this danger which concerned the writer, in the present warning passage as well as in later ones.

Commentary from Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

In his proclamation of the greatness of Christ, the unknown author of the book of Hebrews presented the Lord Jesus as superior to Moses. While doing this may seem unnecessary to us, it was important that the Jewish readers of this epistle understand the supremacy of Christ over Israel's revered lawgiver, for the new covenant Christ instituted was infinitely superior to the covenant brought to the nation by Moses centuries before (8:6). In setting forth Christ's superiority over Moses, the author employed the metaphor of a house (Heb. 3:1-6). He praised Moses for his faithful service in "his house." Moses' "house" refers to the household of God—that is, God's people, Israel. This was Moses' place of service—among God's chosen people—and he faithfully discharged his duties. Christ, however, was "worthy of more glory," or honor, because He built the house. In fact, He built both the household of Israel in the Old Testament and the household of the church in the New Testament. The point is that Moses was a servant in the house that was built by God. Clearly, the builder of the house is greater than the one who serves in it. This brings us to Hebrews 3:4. The writer seemed to stop at this point to insert a brief explanation, stating that every house has a human builder. Here the literal idea points to a spiritual meaning. "Before any of us became Christians, and thereby parts of Christ's house, the church, someone introduced us to the gospel. That person was responsible in a human sense for part of God's house... But on the divine side, God alone creates the house and continues building it as new believers are added. Human witnesses are but the instruments He uses. He is the Builder. The Builder is greater than any of His tools" (MacArthur, Hebrews, Moody). The author of Hebrews then went on to explain that God, in fact, has built all things. Therefore, He is greater—far above—all things. God is identified as the Creator of all things here; at the same time, the focus of this passage is Jesus Christ, God's Son. He is the one the reader is to "consider" (Heb. 3:1), and He is the one who is "counted worthy of more glory than Moses" (vs. 3) because He built the house. As one author aptly noted, "The author of Hebrews . . . does not make a clear distinction between God and the Son. Rather he teaches that God works through the Son; for example, in creation (Heb. 1:2). . . . God the Father, then, builds everything through his Son. And because Christ constructs God's house, he is worthy of greater honor than Moses" (Kistemaker, Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Baker). Like Moses, we are all called to be faithful in serving God where He places us. Yet no matter how faithful we are or how much we accomplish for the Lord, we can never claim any honor for ourselves. The Lord has redeemed us, equipped us, and in His grace and mercy and love chosen to use us in some small way. All praise and glory must go to our sovereign Lord, the Builder of the house.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Some people are fortunate to observe exceptional talent before it is widely recognized. They see a young athlete perform, hear a budding musician play, or listen to an emerging leader deliver a speech. The discerning recognize that they are experiencing something remarkable. When the talented individual later rises to prominence, the early witnesses are able to say, "I knew I was in the presence of greatness even way back when." In some ways, Jesus appeared as an unexceptional person (Isaiah 53:2b). Yet in ways that some perceived at the time, he was unlike any other. In his resurrection from the dead, God confirmed that Jesus was indeed like no other! No mere prophet or wise man, he was God's divine Son, the one who fulfilled all of God's great promises. In our lesson today, we will consider two texts that emphasize this. The first will show us how Jesus compared and contrasted with God's leaders who came before, thereby demonstrating him to be fundamentally greater than all others. The second will remind us how Jesus demonstrated greatness by the authority with which he taught, even before his resurrection.

Our first segment of our lesson text is from the book of Hebrews. The background is therefore the same as that of last week's lesson, and that information need not be repeated here. Our second text is from the end of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount as Matthew 5:1-7:29 records it. The lowly son of a carpenter from the lowly town of Nazareth was in the first of his three years of earthly ministry. He was on his first general tour of Galilee (4:23-11:30) as he taught what it means to be subjects of God's kingdom. He spoke with an authority that could only belong to God. To listen to Jesus and obey meant blessing; to ignore him meant ruin. Hebrews explains how Jesus, the divine, authoritative Son of God, fulfilled God's promises. Matthew shows how Jesus' one-of-a-kind greatness was revealed in what he said and did. Together they declare that to follow Jesus is to be in the presence of greatness.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Jesus as the Builder (Heb 3:1-6)

- 1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,
- 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.
- 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.
- 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.
- 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,
- 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

Builder who is faithful (1-2)

Faithful high priest (Heb 2:17)

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Faithful in His forgiveness (1 John 1:9)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Faithful in His witness (Rev 3:14)

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

Faithful to do all He says (1 Thess 5:23-24)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Faithful in His strengthening and protection (2 Thess 3:3)

3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Faithful, even if we are faithless (2 Tim 2:11-13)

11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Faithful to fulfill His promises (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Builder who is worthy (3-4)

Worthy because God is holy (Isa 6:3)

3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Worthy because God is compassionate and gracious (Ex 34:6)

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

Worthy because God is righteous (Ps 7:11)

11 God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.

Worthy because God is merciful (Dan 9:9)

9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;

Worthy because God is just (2 Thess 1:6)

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you

Builder who is the owner (5-6)

God owns because He made us (Ps 100:3)

3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

God owns because we are the Lord's (Rom 14:8)

8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

God owns because Jesus redeemed us (Titus 2:14)

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

God owns because we are God's building (1 Cor 3:9)

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

God owns because we belong to Him (1 Cor 3:23)

23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

God owns because the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing it (2 Cor 1:22)

22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Jesus as the Foundation (Matt 7:24-29)

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Foundation that can't be shaken (24-27)

Foundation of a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28)

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Foundation that can never be destroyed (Dan 2:44)

44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Foundation that will never perish or spoil (1 Peter 1:3-5)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Foundation that endures forever (Ps 125:1)

125 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

Foundation that is rooted and built in Jesus (Col 2:6-7)

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Foundation that is astonishing (28)

Astonishing because God's name and house are holy (Hab 2:20)

20 But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

Astonishing because we are unclean before a holy God (Isa 6:1-7)

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Astonishing because God's dwelling is holy (Zech 2:13)

13 Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

Astonishing because anywhere God is it is holy ground (Acts 7:30-33)

30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. 31 When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: 32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. 33 "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground.

Astonishing considering God's handiworks (Ps 8:3-4)

3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Foundation that is authorized (29)

Authorized because a King's word is supreme (Eccl 8:4)

4 Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

Authorized because all authority has been given to Jesus (Matt 28:18)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Authorized because of Divine teaching (Luke 4:32)

32 They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

Authorized because people believe after hearing Him (Acts 13:12)

12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Authorized because Jesus has been exalted above all (Phil 2:9-10)

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Just as Jesus is **"higher than the angels"** (1:1—2:18), He is also greater than Moses (3:1-6). Our Lord was faithful **"to the one who appointed him"** (3:2). Moses was faithful **"in God's house"** (3:5), and thus he is viewed as being a part of the house in verses 3 and 4. What is this **"house"**? The **"house"** is **My house** (3:5), that is, God's house. This is a term that is often used in reference to the nation Israel, and then also to the temple. No doubt here **"house"** means that Moses was faithful in (or among) the people of God, the Israelites. I say *among* because the author's point here is that Moses is a part of the house; the Son, however, is greater than the house. He is the builder of the house. The Creator is always greater than the creation.

Let's not miss the subtlety of the author here. In verse 1, the reader is exhorted to **"take note of Jesus."** In verse 2, Jesus and Moses are compared. In verses 3-6a, Jesus and Moses are contrasted, showing Jesus to be greater than Moses. But in verses 3 and 4, if Jesus is being shown to be Moses, then He is greater because He is the **"builder of the house,"** but the **"builder of the house"** is said here to be **"God."** Let us not miss the fact that our author is saying that Jesus is the Son, and Jesus is God. He is proclaiming the deity of the Lord Jesus.

Two more elements of contrast are introduced in verses 5 and 6. First, we see that Moses was faithful **"as a servant,"** while **"Christ"** was faithful **"as a son."** Second, this contrast between **"servant"** and **"son"** is underscored by the fact that Moses was a servant **"in"** all God's house (verse 5), while Christ is the Son **"over"** God's house. I love the story Bible teacher Ray Stedman told about visiting a ranch in Montana. At first, Ray

knew only the son of one of the ranch hands. When he visited, they were restricted from the main house, and they rode the old “nags” when they went horseback riding. Then, Ray says, he became friends with the owner’s son. Now it was a whole new experience. They had free run of the ranch and could go wherever they pleased. When they rode horses, they rode the best horses. That’s the difference between a *servant* and a *son*.

There is one more observation that I would point out to you. The author began by referring to “*Jesus*,” then to Him as “*God*” (verse 4). In verse 6, He is the “Son” and “*Christ*.” Jesus is the Son, God, and the Christ, that is, the Messiah. Some Jews tended to understand these (and other) titles as referring to different persons. Such is not the case with the author of Hebrews.

How Iffy is Our Faith? Hebrews 3:6b

We are of his house, if in fact we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we take pride in (3:6b, emphasis mine).

So the author has shown us that the Lord Jesus Christ is vastly superior to Moses, as great a man as he was. Moses was part of God’s “**house**,” and he was faithful. And now we are told that we, likewise, are of God’s house, “*if we hold firmly to our confidence. . .*” How do we deal with this “*if*”? Our answer has several parts:

1. “*If*” statements are not restricted to the Book of Hebrews. The fact is that we find similar statements in many places in the New Testament:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you**. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him (Romans 8:9, emphasis mine).

And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ) – **if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him** (Romans 8:17, emphasis mine).

Notice therefore the kindness and harshness of God – harshness toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, **provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off** (Romans 11:22, emphasis mine).

Put yourselves to the test to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize regarding yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you – **unless, indeed, you fail the test!** (2 Corinthians 13:5, emphasis mine)

22 But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him – 23 **if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard**. This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant (Colossians 1:22-23, emphasis mine).

1 So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, 3 **if you have experienced the Lord’s kindness** (1 Peter 2:1-3, emphasis mine).

3 Now by this we know that we have come to know God: **if we keep his commandments** (1 John 2:3, emphasis mine).

Our problem, then, is not unique to Hebrews. If we don’t deal with it here, we will face it elsewhere.

2. *The author assumes the best about his readers.* That is to say, the author assumes that his readers are fellow believers in Jesus Christ. We saw this by his statements in the first verse of chapter 3. His readers are holy brothers, partners in the heavenly calling, and those who confess Jesus as apostle and high priest. The author’s statements in the rest of the book only confirm the conclusion that he assumes most of his readers are saved.

3. *The author does not look at the world through rose-colored glasses.* He does assume that most of his readers are believers in Jesus Christ. He does not believe them to be infallible. He understands that the danger of “drifting” is very real and that drawing near is not the path of least resistance. Thus, failure is dealt with as a real possibility.

4. *This epistle is written to a church.* It may not be a large church, but virtually all the commentators agree that it is written to a church (even if we are not certain where it may be). Whenever a church is addressed, the assumption is made that most of the recipients have a genuine faith in Jesus Christ. But it also means that it is very possible that one or more members of the church addressed may not be saved. Thus the qualifications and the “*ifs*” that we find in the epistles.

5. The *“if texts”* are not intended to teach or imply that salvation is by works. The author is simply telling us that those who are truly saved are those who will also persevere to the end. Their faith and trust in Jesus will not fail under pressure. We are encouraged to draw near because we are saved, not to work harder in order to be saved. It is Christ who saves us, it is Christ through His Spirit who sanctifies us, and it is Christ who keeps us. This is precisely why we need to draw near (and stay near) to Him.

6. The *“if statements”* assume human weaknesses. Only God knows the hearts of men. We know that there will be some who assume that they have gained entrance into heaven who will not be admitted:

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven – only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons and do many powerful deeds?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!’” (Matthew 7:21-23)

Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus must have been a great shock to the Pharisees who heard it. They assumed the rich man would make it to heaven and that the poor man would join others like him in hell. Just the reverse occurred. Our consolation is that God knows His own:

19 However, God’s solid foundation remains standing, bearing this seal: *“The Lord knows those who are his,”* and “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from evil” (2 Timothy 2:19).

We do not know with absolute certainty those who are saved and those who are not. Some folks make their relationship with Jesus pretty plain, both by their profession and by their practice. But others leave us scratching our heads. My point here is to say that because we cannot know the hearts of men, we dare not assume all to be saved, even those who are fairly regular attendees at church. Thus, we must always leave room for the possibility that some who hear us may be unsaved and outside the faith. And because of this, it is only proper to include an “if” here and there, to address such folks. That is why I attempt, in nearly every sermon, to give the gospel to my audience. I assume that someone listening to or reading my sermon may be lost and in need of salvation. That is what our author is doing with his “ifs.”

7. *The purpose of this epistle is not to create doubt, but to turn our attention to Jesus.* Let’s not lose sight of what the Book of Hebrews is all about. It is an epistle that is addressed to a church, made up mainly of true believers. Over time, these believers, like us, can grow cold in their walk with the Lord, cold in their love for Christ and for men, much like the saints in Laodicea:

14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write the following: “This is the solemn pronouncement of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God’s creation: 15 ‘I know your deeds, that **you are neither cold nor hot**. I wish you were either cold or hot! 16 So because **you are lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth! 17 Because you say, “I am rich and have acquired great wealth, and need nothing,” but do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, 18 take my advice and buy gold from me refined by fire so you can become rich! Buy from me white clothing so you can be clothed and your shameful nakedness will not be exposed, and buy eye salve to put on your eyes so you can see! 19 **All those I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent!** 20 Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me. 21 I will grant the one who conquers permission to sit with me on my throne, just as I too conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:14-22, emphasis mine).

As our Lord invites the lukewarm Laodiceans to repent and return to intimate fellowship with Him (as symbolized by eating a meal with Him), so the writer to the Book of Hebrews warns his readers of the dangers of drifting, and exhorts them to draw near to Jesus.

The Hebrews were not to look back to Judaism, nor to the Old Covenant, nor even to great men like Moses. They were to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith (Hebrews 3:1; 12:2). The last thing our author wants is for us to look to ourselves; his goal is to get us to look to Jesus. The “if passages” are intended to call our attention to our spiritual condition. And, whether good or bad, the exhortation is the same.

Are you lost in sin, under divine condemnation, and headed for an eternity in hell? Look to Jesus! He is the only solution. He is not only God; He also took on humanity, so that He could die in the sinner’s place, bearing his (or her) punishment. He rose from the dead and is ascended to the right hand of the Father, and in so doing, He restores all who are in Him, by faith, to the glory and dignity that was once ours, before the fall.

Are you drifting from God, negligent about studying His Word, spasmodic about your church attendance and fellowship with the saints, apathetic about the peril of those who are without Jesus? Look to Jesus! He is the One who saves, sanctifies, and keeps. It is abiding in Him that we need.

Are you troubled, in need, fearful, discouraged? Look to Jesus!

Our author does not want us to look to mere men, even those as great as Moses. And he certainly doesn't want us looking to ourselves, as though we are able to keep our souls. We are to look to Jesus.

The Lord will protect you from all evil;

He will keep your soul ([Psalm 121:7](#), NASB95).

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/7-greater-moses-hebrews-31-6>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Was Jesus' claim to divine authority a true claim? After all, he was arrested, convicted, and crucified on a Roman cross! Some who were there said the crucifixion itself proved that Jesus was disfavored by God (Matthew 27:43; Luke 23:35-39); others reached a different conclusion (Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:40-43). God settled the question when he raised Jesus from the dead. The Gospel of Matthew, the letter to the Hebrews, and the rest of the New Testament show us that many moved from astonishment to faith as a result. Will we accept the authority of Jesus, or will we not? This has remained the most vital of decisions for nearly 2,000 years. If Jesus is indeed the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes, if he is indeed the exalted Creator and self-sacrificing Redeemer, then he must be heard and obeyed. All of life, now and forever, depends on doing so.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Jesus is the center of the Christian faith (Heb. 3:1)
2. Jesus was faithful just as Moses was (vs. 2)
3. Jesus, who built the house, is worthy of more glory than Moses, who was a faithful servant (vss. 3-5)
4. Jesus is over God's house, which is composed of believers who remain in Him (vs. 6)
5. The one who obeys Jesus' words will not fall away when hard times come (Matt. 7:24-25)
6. The one who does not obey Jesus' words will be crushed by the trials of life (vss. 26-27)
7. Jesus' authority showed His superiority to human teachers (vss. 28-29)