

• *The writer asks us to gaze on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ*

We now move into a new major section in our letter to the Hebrews. So far our writer has been pointing to the greatness and the sympathy of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is greater than the angels. He is like Aaron the high priest but is so much greater in his sympathy. We are asked to consider the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. ¹*So then, brothers and sisters, sharers in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.* The very heart of the Christian life is to learn to keep in mind our Lord Jesus Christ. We would have far fewer problems if we learned to do so.

1. As our apostle

1. **We gaze on Jesus as our apostle.** Jesus is an 'apostle', a fully commissioned representative of God, the perfect representative of the Father. When we see the Lord Jesus Christ with the eye of faith, we are seeing what God is like. 'He who has seen me, has seen the Father,' said Jesus.

2. As our high priest

2. **We gaze on Jesus as our high priest.** Our writer has already said that Jesus is a merciful and faithful high priest ^{□1}. He asks us to start thinking what this means ^{□2}. In 4:14, 5:4–6, 9–10 and 6:20 he will say more. Then chapters 7 to 10 will have detailed explanations of Jesus' work as advocate, intercessor and mediator.

□1 2:17
□2 3:1

3. As the supreme object of our confident faith

3. **We gaze on Jesus as the supreme object of our confident faith.** Our writer asks us to consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, that is, as the one in whom we have publicly and openly put our faith. One of the concerns of our writer is that we should hold on to the faith that we have boldly made known to others. He will speak of holding fast our confidence (*parresia*, 3:6) and our 'boast' (*kauchema*, 3:6) and not developing an evil heart of unbelief ^{□1}. We are to hold fast our assurance (*hypostasis*, 3:14) and not let unbelief develop in our hearts ^{□2}. We are to hold fast our confession (*homologia*, 4:14) and maintain confidence (*parresia*, 4:16) and show eagerness to reach 'full assurance' (*plerophoria*, 6:11) and have 'strong encouragement' (*paraklesis*, 6:18). We must have confidence (*parresia*, 10:19) and with 'full assurance' (*plerophoria*, 10:22) hold fast the confession (*homologia*) of our hope ^{□3}. We are not to throw away our confidence (*parresia*, 10:35). Faith itself is an assurance (*hypostasis*, 11:1) and conviction (*elengchos*, 11:1) which is indispensable to pleasing God. How – we might ask – do we maintain such confident faith? Our writer's answer is: by looking to Jesus.

□1 3:12

□2 3:19

□3 10:23

• *Faith itself is an assurance*

4. As a Greater-than-Moses

4. **We gaze on Jesus as a Greater-than-Moses.** Our writer slightly changes direction as he begins to compare Jesus with Moses, the leader of the nation of Israel and mediator of the 'old' covenant between God and Israel. Both Jesus and Moses were faithful to God. He is speaking of Jesus when he says: ²*He is faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all his house.* Moses was not always faithful. In his early days he sometimes did things in a self-centred manner (as we see in the early chapters of Exodus), but, like Jesus, he learned obedience through suffering and eventually he was famous for his minute faithfulness in building the tabernacle.

• *Jesus was faithful*

Jesus was faithful also. We can see in the four gospels how he was faithful with God's word, faithful in prayer, faithful in going steadily to the cross, faithful despite all our unworthiness, faithful to God's will. There is nothing that will make Jesus to be unfaithful to us. His faithfulness is unconditional.

• So he will be faithful to us

Back behind Jesus' faithfulness is his knowledge of his being appointed by God to do all that he did. Hebrews 3:2 is often translated 'He was faithful...', yet our writer's word may equally be translated as a present tense ('He is faithful...') and in the case of Jesus this is more appropriate. Jesus is still faithful to his people, still faithfully ministering to them from the heavenly throne of God.

• The writer contrasts Moses and Jesus

Hebrews 3:3 goes on to contrast Moses and Jesus. Jesus has an altogether greater place in God's plans and purposes. Jesus is greater than Moses. ³*For he is counted worthy of greater glory above Moses, to the extent that the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.* ⁴*For every house is built by someone, but the one who builds all things is God.* Houses always have some kind of builder. So if God's people are like a house, there must be a builder somewhere. In this case 'the one who builds all things is God'. This must be a reference to Christ as the **divine** Saviour ¹. A reference to God the Father is less likely, for here our writer is contrasting Moses and Jesus. God the Father is not specially being mentioned. It is Jesus who is the divine Mediator, Jesus who is the captain of our salvation with all the authority of God because he is God!

¹ compare 1:3, 8

• Moses built a material 'house'

In verse 4b the material house is mentioned explicitly for the first time: ⁵*And Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of things which would be spoken,* ⁶*but Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house.* Hebrews 3:6b adds a word of explanation: *We ourselves are his house if we hold on to our boldness and our joyful delight in our hope.*

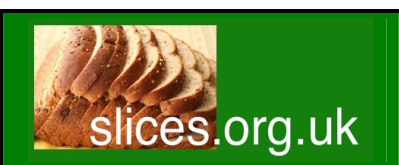
• Jesus built a spiritual 'house'

Both Moses and Christ were captains and leaders of the people of God but Jesus was and is altogether greater. Jesus builds a spiritual house. Moses built a material house, made of gold, silver, copper-alloy, dyed cloths, linen, goatskins, and the like. Moses is a member and participant of this spiritual house but he is not its builder in the same way that Jesus is. Moses is worthy of honour! But he is not at all the supreme builder of the house of God, God's worldwide church. Only Jesus is the builder of this spiritual house.

• Moses' work was prediction

Moses' work in building the tabernacle was to provide a testimony of things which would be spoken ¹. We have here the first statement in the book concerning the tabernacle's purpose. Its function was predictive. It 'testified' to what God would one day do, and to what would one day be more clearly expressed. The tabernacle was a kind of prophecy of the coming grace of God, but Jesus is the grace of God come in the flesh. Moses' work was prediction; Jesus' work was fulfilment.

¹ 3:5



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
 Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk