

Hebrews 3:1-6

“Professors verses possessors”

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I. Introduction

In Catholic circles the main issue of importance as it relates to the founding fathers of the faith is apostolic succession. But for most people they are less interested in apostolic succession and more interested in apostolic success. *What can Jesus do for me right now? Can He do anything about the problems I face this very moment?* Hebrews Chapter 2 closed on the four-fold practical note of what Jesus can do for us because of the incarnation. Because of Jesus finished work He has enabled us too:

- 9. Vs. 5-9 RECAPTURE OUR LOST DESTINY.
- 10. Vs. 10-13 RECOVER OUR LOST UNITY.
- 11. Vs. 14-15 RELEASED US FROM OUR PRESENT BONDAGE.
- 12. Vs. 16-18 RESTORED US IN TIMES OF FAILURE.

Chapter 3 picks up the fourth reason saying that Jesus as our compassionate and merciful High Priest came that he might help us when we fail. There are two equally important truths that cause a lot of folk’s difficulties today concerning Christianity: What is the Church and who is in it?

II. Vs. 1-2 The House of God

Vs. 1 The use of the word “*therefore*” shows that the writer is drawing a conclusion from his preceding statement, that Jesus is better than angels and prophets. Now He builds on this as he asks his Jewish readers to examine Jesus in relation to Moses. Notice that he calls these Hebrew readers “*holy brethren*”, the word “*holy*” is a word that means “*set apart for God*” and as such isn’t a reference to quality of life but rather to a position in

salvation. This is an important designation as it relates to this letter as the author is addressing the “professing church” which was made up of “*real possessing believers*” and those who were only intellectually agreement. The writer knew some of those who would read this letter weren’t saved but address them based upon their profession not on the estimation of their true spiritual condition. This group of Hebrews needed to “consider” carefully the the “High Priest of their confession” Jesus as some of them were turning back to the sacrificial system for atonement from their sins instead of trusting in the “Lamb of God” who dies once and for all for the sin of all. The writer describes Jesus as the “Apostle” which speaks of the act of sending someone out on a commission to do something, the person sent having the credentials. It is the same word that was used of Moses in Exodus 3:10.

The word “*confession*” means to speak the same thing as another and here the context is in reference of agreeing with God as to who His Son Jesus is. The use of this word is set up as a contrast to some of the Hebrews who “*professed*” or bore witness to this by words without having to having to rely upon this “confession” wen faced with persecution. Those that professed when faced with persecution turned back to the sacrificial system instead of trusting in Christ’ sacrifice of the cross. The fact that they turned back revealed that what they had was profession without true possession!

Vs. 2 This caparison of the Messiah with Moses was a very delicate one as Moses was revered by the Hebrews. The writer starts this comparison by saying both Jesus and Moses were “faithful” but the difference between them was not their faithfulness but their position as Moses was a faithful “servant” and Jesus was a faithful “Son”.

Six times in six verses the word *house* appears and in each occurrence it is in reference to the “*house of God*”. Far too many people think that the phrase “*the house of God*” refers to the **church building**. A look through the scripture will reveal that a building is never called the house of God. This is the point Steven made in Acts 7:48 when he said “*The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says.*” The early church never referred to their buildings as the House of God. When the church referred to the “*house of God*” they meant **the people**, NOT a building! The house of God is YOU and me! Though the temple or the tabernacle, is called by this phrase it is only done so as a picture. Buildings were never actually meant to be the place where God dwelled as Isaiah 66:1-2 reminds us that, “*Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool -- where is the house which you would build for me? ... All these things my hand has made.*” The truth according to Psalm 22:3 God is, “*Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*” And according to Jesus in Matthew 18:20 “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” It is clear what the author meant as the “House of God” to stand for as in verse 6 where he writes, “*But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house **WE ARE**...*” God’s plan was NOT to indwell buildings but rather to dwell in people, that they may be the tabernacle of his indwelling. The next to last chapter of Revelation (21:3b) we read that “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.*” Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 6:19 “*do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*” This is the focus of all the Bible: God's purpose to inhabit us and to make us the manifestation of his life, as Paul prays in Ephesians 3:19 that “*you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*” The

message of the Bible is that it takes Christ for us to be a Christian, when we put Christ into the Christian, we put God back into the mankind.

The writers point directly relates to this as the people that are the house of God, Moses ministered as a servant, but Christ as a Son. Therefore, the Son is much more to be obeyed, much more to be listened to, much more to be honored, than the servant. Moses served faithfully as a servant. **The ministry of a servant is always preparing things.** He must prepare meals, he must prepare rooms, he must prepare the yard. **He is always working in the anticipation of something yet to come.** His work is in view of that which is yet future. The writer readily acknowledges that, “*Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant*”, his purpose was to prepare US “*the house of God*” to be inhabited by the Son! **The role of a son in a house is to take over everything, to possess it, to use whatever he likes.** The house was made for Him. So Christ has come to **inhabit us**, as Paul again prays in Ephesians 3:17 “*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*”.

III. Vs. 3-5 The Messiah verses Moses

Vs. 3-5 Having said both were faithful the reason Jesus is better than Moses is that the “builder” of the house is greater than the house. Jesus is the architect and builder of the house of Israel and Moses is a member of that house. Jesus is the builder of the house but not by independent will or agency of His own, but as being the son of God who built all things.

Further more Moses faithfulness was as a “servant” which is a noble word that bound servant as the services Moses rendered were exceptionally important and valued by God but were a “*testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward.*” Which confirms the idea that Moses was a servant in God’s house, where Jesus is a Son over that

same house! Both were faithful in respect to their positions.

IV. Vs. 6 If

Vs. 6 The writer keeps in mind the fact that only some of his Hebrew readers were saved declares, “*We are that house -- if.*” At this point he interjects the little word, *if*: “*And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and.. our hope.*” The possibility is raised of being self-deceived in this matter of belonging to Christ, of being his house. Some were making only a “profession of salvation” that under persecution were going back to the sacrifices and in so doing were revealing that they weren’t apart of the “house of God”. The little word “IF” in the Greek text is introducing a hypothetical condition that is yet unfulfilled. If the Jews who he was writing too “HELD FAST” the confidence of Jesus’ sacrifice, which would reveal that they were of the “*house of God*”. Their salvation hung on their action! What is at issue is NOT the “RETENTION” of their salvation but their “POSSESSION” of their salvation in the first place. The text doesn’t say, “in whose house we will CONTINUE to be” instead it says, “whose house WE ARE”. The subject at hand is NOT the SECURITY of the believer, instead the question is; are they a believer! The test was up to the individual to determine and they would be able to see this if they “held fast” which is a nautical term and speaks of holding ones course towards shore. If they stayed the course of their profession than they would show that they had possession of their salvation! If they left the course of their profession they would reveal that they were never in possession of their salvation. The apostle John would write of them in 1 John 2:19 that “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they*

might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”

If once having **professed** to receive the Lord Jesus, we do not manifest signs of new life, there is nothing that transforms our old nature and behavior than, we are simply professors of truth but not **possessors** of Christ! As such we would be self-deceived. In spite of external appearances, and religious observances, we never had true faith. This is the essence of the argument of the entire book of Hebrews. The writer is not speaking of people who deliberately tries to pass themselves off as Christian, he is talking here about some who have gone through every possible ritual to identify themselves with Christianity. Because of this they feel they are Christians. They believe the right things, they hold the right creed, they are rigid about the proclamation of the truth and conform to doctrine in every degree. But they are self-deceived, for as they are unable to manifest what God has come into human hearts to produce, they reveal that there never was faith in the beginning.