

## *“The Glorious Builder”*

### **Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest**

Hebrews 3:1-6

Rev. Jeff Stivason

April 13, 2018

Our heavenly Father, we are thankful for this day and thankful for the Lord, thankful for the many blessings that we have in Him. Lord, we recognize that in Your word You tell us that these blessings are ours in Christ and that simply by faith. And that is not our own, but it is of Your working by Your Spirit in us. And there is a sense, Father, in which this is difficult for some to believe, in fact, some don't. But those who have been enabled to believe, well, it is a wonder. It is a joy and it is a comfort. And so we praise You for it this morning, thanking You that You've enabled us to look to You in faith, that we see the ugliness of sin and we repent of it, that we look to Christ and see His beauty, apprehend something of Your mercy in Him, and reach out. And so, Father, we thank You for the gospel.

Father, as we come before You today, we are thankful that Bruce is making strides, that he's progressing in his recovery. And we pray that that would continue. And we pray that he would make leaps and bounds. Father, we're thankful for it and look forward to more.

Father, we also pray for the Cody family in their loss, and what a tragedy it is. And yet we are thankful that You are sovereign. And in the midst of life's tragedies we know that nothing shakes You. Nothing rocks You. You are completely sovereign, overseeing all that happens and knowing all that happens before it happens because You ordained it to come to pass. No matter how difficult it is for us, it's in Your purposes for our good. And that becomes a difficulty to wrestle with in the midst of tragedy, and so we pray that You'll help the Cody family to wrestle through it. And we pray that as they come out the other end of that tragedy, though there may be lost forever in their lives, they will see You as bigger and more gracious and more good than they ever did before.

Father, we pray for our brother Dick. And it's our longing and desire that You'll comfort him while he's lonely in the hospital. We pray for his health, that You would enable him to recover. We're thankful for his humor, his wit, for his love for the brethren. We pray that Your hand would be upon him for good. We ask that You'll bring recovery to his body.

And Father, we pray for others. There are numerous people on that prayer list that we receive week by week. We ask that You'll tend to each one, providing each one with the care they need, and giving each one a sense of Your abiding love. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Well, let's turn to Hebrews chapter 3 today. And while you do I think I want to take a minute to talk to you about a question that was raised the last time and that I engaged a little bit with this morning that you might have, that you might be wrestling with. It's the question of sin and its ongoing effects in our lives. And so let me just take a

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minute to address that. And you can ask questions and we can interact a little bit about that if you'd like.

But when you turn to Romans chapters 6 and 7, one of the interesting things that you find is that there are different ways of talking about sin that at points seem to be in tension and at odds with other places. For instance, you find in chapter 6 that the old man is dead. But then you read on in chapter 7. And you realize that though we were bound to the Law, it wasn't the Law that died. We died to the Law in Jesus Christ.

And then when you look at the text of Scripture, when you look at Romans chapter 7, you realize that it says that sin sleeps and then revives, or that it is dead and then it revives in us. And so all of these different ways of looking at sin—and sometimes they appear to be intentional with one another—and yet what Paul is doing is that he's trying to take what is a dive and show us from different aspects what's happening in the Christian life, both before our life in Christ and after.

And so one of the things that I've tried to do is that I've tried to get a mental image or a concept that helps me to understand all of the different facets—not perfectly, certainly. This is something that I'm taking from one of these images and then imposing it on the others for understanding, Sig. But I'll tell you how I do it.

I take the basic concept that we were married to the first Adam, and that first Adam died. He's dead to us. And yet there is a corpse that lives within my life. Adam is dead.

When the Law shines into my life on to that corpse, it begins to stink and cause problems for my life, and I need to clean it up. That's the Spirit's enablement. And that's what the Puritans would have called *the mortification of sin*. And that's where things get a little bit dicey, because mortification means *to kill*, and I'm talking about cleanup. There's a cleanup process that goes along. And that's my progressive sanctification.

So what you do is that in that concept you have both aspects of sanctification—the *definitive* aspect; Adam is dead to me,—and then the *cleanup* aspect, the ongoing cleanup of the corpse in me. And that's the progressive aspect of sanctification.

I think that you can make that image to fit into any one of those other images that Paul might use. For instance, sin is dead and yet it revives. Well, you can think about the Law shining into your life on to the corpse and the corpse beginning to stink, and you have to clean up that area of your life, all of this again by the Spirit's enablement. You don't do any of this on your own power. But that's just a way of thinking about some of those different images that you find in Romans chapters 6 and 7 that we talked about last time that I'm just again revisiting now. Do you have any questions about that? Yes, Ted?

**Ted?** Jeff, honestly, out of all respect, (*laughter*), you can see where all of this is coming from. I've always heard you talk about the ongoing remnant of sin that is a corpse. I don't see that as the case.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** I see that the sinning is very much a real thing and an alive thing.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** So I believe the Puritans were right. It is a mortification or putting to death of sin versus a cleaning up process.

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**Jeff:** Yes. You can get that from Romans 7. Romans 7 says that sin is dead and it revives, right? And so in a sermon I preached recently I used the image that sin is like a sleeping bear that we’re chained to in a cell. And the Law comes in and says, “Don’t feed the bear.” And it says it in a loud voice, right? And so the bear wakes up. And we appeal to the Law for help. We say, “Help us, help us! You woke the bear up; help us!”

And the Law says, “I don’t know how to help. I can’t provide help. I can only tell you what not to do. And don’t feed the bear.” And meanwhile the bear kills us and eats us, right? So there’s a sense in which we have to kill the bear. But we can’t kill the bear by the Law. We have to be in Christ so that the bear might be killed by grace. But that takes us back to the old Adam being dead to us. And how do you understand that with a living bear chained next to me in a cell? And that’s where I sort of think that you can talk about the cleanup process, though I know it doesn’t work when you’re talking about a living bear trying to kill me. Yes?

**Participant:** What about chapter 8 in Romans, where you get the Spirit to come in to give you the kinds of resources that we’re talking about?

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely right. So when I cry out, “Father!”, it’s in distress that I’m crying out, “Abba, Father!” You know, it’s not that sort of “Oh, Father!” This is real distress and I’m in the midst of it. Father, help me! And the resources are found in Him by His Spirit, absolutely. That’s what I want to stress again so that Bill doesn’t raise his hand.

*(Laughter)* I keep stressing. I don’t know where Bill is, but—

**Participant:** Don’t worry about Bill. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** All right. Ah, there he is! He’s right in front of me. He’s got the microphone. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** This is a huge issue.

**Jeff:** Yes, it is.

**Participant:** It’s a huge issue because there is a lot of pressure that either we put on ourselves or in our bodies, in the Christian body, in essence to portray ourselves as having overcome sin.

**Jeff:** Yes, right. Mm-hmm.

**Participant:** And I find that the most amazing thing about the whole conversion process, about growing in grace, is that so much of that sinful attraction hangs onto us.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** Now I find that some guys just by the way they’re wired are less attached to the passions of sin. Others are more taken away with it. That doesn’t mean that both won’t have a struggle. But for those who have more of a control over it, it may be just because of the way they are, not because they’re especially disciplined. We can then set a standard for everybody else. And then we all clam up and not talk about our sins because, gee whiz, he’s made it. Why haven’t I made it? Maybe I’m not really saved. Maybe I’m not working hard enough. That’s why in struggling with the sin in our lives it makes us desperate for Christ because we see no other option. I fail so many times in my own life in my sin.

I’m thinking right now of a situation with a very godly person in this room right now. I won’t mention him. We would look up to him. And yet I was with him once over dinner.

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There was a very attractive young woman across the way. I noticed her. I know I had to cast my eyes away, one of a few times. And this other fellow just kept staring at her.

Now you would think he wouldn't do that. But he was caught up in that. And I pointed that out to him. And so it just—

**Jeff:** Well, you know, here's the thing I would say. I've thought about that. I don't think it's a dispositional thing. I actually think that it's that some of sin in different ways, and they're less public. And so it's not that some struggle less because their dispositions enable them to overcome sin or enable them to suppress sin. I think it's that every one of us struggles with sin. But because depravity is total and pervasive, and yet we're not as sinful as we could possibly be, that means that each one of us struggles in a different way and in a different area. So it might be less visible. Anybody else? Yes, Bill? *(Laughter)*

**Bill:** It's not me. The only thing I yield to is temptation. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Anybody else? *(Laughter)* I'm not going to touch it. *(Laughter)* I'm going to let that one die. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** I'll just add one thought to the conversation.

**Jeff:** Yes, please.

**Participant:** I know you've been preaching through this in church on Sundays, and so I have an advantage here. One of the things that I thought was really helpful when you went through this in Romans was the whole idea of reckoning to ourselves what is true.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** And Romans 6 does tell us to “*reckon yourselves indeed to be dead to sin.*” And so we understand that through Christ we are dead to sin. And we need to get ourselves in that mindset and live that way, and not let sin as a deceiver deceive us into sin, and that leading to more sin.

**Jeff:** Yes. Well said.

**Participant:** Hold on. *(Laughter)* Having said that, I mean, is it just because—Jeff preaches on reckoning ourselves dead to sin. That's clear. Wachman Nee is very big on this. And so you say, “Okay. I didn't know I was supposed to reckon myself dead to sin. Now that I know it, I will start doing it.” But the fact of the matter is I know I'm supposed to do it, and I don't keep reckoning myself as dead to sin. To me that's the issue. It may be for some a matter of knowledge. But for most of us it is not.

**Jeff:** Yes, but let me just answer it this way. I think there is that reckoning, and then there is the applying of that reckoning. But I think in the middle of it there is a half-step. And the half step is expectation, right?

So when we take our kids out when they're little to go eat at someone's house, we always tell them the three things that we want them to do. And by the time they hear it the umpteenth time, they go, “Dad, we already know what the three things are, right? Eat everything we take and put on our plate, right?” And they can name them.

And I say it to them. I say, “You know, you are absolutely right. You guys know these things well.” But you don't always live up to the expectation, right? So there is a knowing and an applying, and then there is the expectation which is the half step.

And so when Paul says this to us, I think that when he actually talks about “*do not offer your bodies as instruments of righteousness,*” after saying, “*reckon yourselves*

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*dead to sin,*” it’s in the subjunctive tense, which means that you might and you might not, right? There’s a possibility that you will and there’s a possibility that you won’t. And the idea then is that I think Paul is recognizing the expectation level. This is what you reckon. God expects this of us. And the application is that we’ll do it.

But I think that what you’re saying and what I’m saying and what Jordan is saying is that we’re living in the expectation mode right now, right?—able to sin and able not to sin. It’s that third level or that third stage in the human will, right?

**Participant:** Jeff, I’m sorry. I had my hand up.

**Jeff:** That’s all right. Go ahead.

**Participant:** What’s your understanding of “I can serve God with my mind, but in my body I continue to serve the law of sin?” That’s a continuing process. It’s my impression that they are talking about the same individuals. The thing is, that’s nice. But no matter what, no matter how fast I can turn away, I still have to turn away.

**Jeff:** I think that’s a converted person that you’re referring to in the latter part of Romans 7. And so there’s the struggle that goes on. But here’s what I would say. I would say that if you go back to 6 and 7, it talks about that we’re not under sin’s dominion. But we’re progressively coming out from under its patterns, right? And so I think that’s what you’re doing.

**Participant:** And when we’re keeping our eyes on them, that’s when those evil temptations or evil desires go away.

**Jeff:** Well, temptations will always be with us no matter how sanctified we are. But what I’m saying is that we are not under sin’s dominion any longer. So you could put this in any number of ways. But the best way to say it is that I have a way out now that I’m in Christ.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And the progressive aspect kicks in when I talk about how to say no to that temptation, right?

**Participant:** Right.

**Jeff:** And whether or not I will say no to that temptation at a given moment, right? I may and I may not, you know.

**Participant:** Or we can disagree about this.

**Jeff:** Right. I may be interrupted from doing something not because I said that I’m going to say no to this sin. But I may be interrupted by something else that’s completely out of my control in the mercy of God, right? And I don’t do it. But that’s not virtuous. But at least it’s better than having done it, right? Yes, Don?

**Don:** You said, “Don’t yield yourselves as instruments of righteousness.” You meant wickedness—

**Jeff:** Yeah, yeah. *(Laughter)* Thanks a lot. *(Laughter)* Yeah, let’s not—

**Participant:** I like your version better. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Don’t call it my version! *(Laughter)* Don’t go down that road. All right, anybody else? A good talk. So let’s progress on then to what we’re going to do today, which is Hebrews chapter 3, verses 1-6. Don, do you have it?

**Don:** Yes, I do.

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**Jeff:** Why don't you read it?

**Don:** It's from the New King James.

**Jeff:** Oh, let's not have you read it then. *(Laughter)* No, go ahead. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** If the New King James was good enough for the apostles, it's good enough for me. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** That's right. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** “*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builds the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but he who builds all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 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.*” This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** All right. Thanks, Don.

**Jeff:** You're welcome.

**Jeff:** Okay, let me ask you a question. When you heard that passage,--and this can be rhetorical; you can answer it if you want,--the question I have for you is this, and at least I want you to answer it in your own thinking. What's the thrust of this passage? When you think about this passage in relationship to the passages that we've looked at and that might be ahead, what do you see? But before we do that, let's just answer what it is that we're going to be doing today. We're going to be looking at *an introduction*. We're going to be asking the question *what is the house?, the relationship between Jesus and Moses, which is the ongoing relationship that we've been looking at, and where do you live?*

So with that, what is the main thrust of this text? Well, you know, there are any number of emphases in this text that you could look at. And part of the problem—and it's not really a problem,--but part of the curiosity is the word “*therefore*”, because you know that the word *therefore* indicates the end of an argument, and therefore there's a conclusion. So what is the conclusion? What's it about? What does it have to do?

Well some people have said that obviously a conclusion has in mind its antecedent, what came before it. And so this is a conclusion of all that has come before. Some have said, no; this is a conclusion with an exhortation built in. In other words, “*therefore,*” and what's built into that same verse, “*consider Jesus.*” So there's a sense in which the exhortation comes right from the *therefore*. And that may be connected to the antecedent, but it's a stand-alone exhortation.

And then the conclusion rather looks ahead to what's in verse 7. And so you take verse 1 and verse 6 of our text. And there's “*consider Jesus.*” Why? Verse 7: that you may not fall away. “*Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts*”—that idea. All of these things and other suggestions have been put forward to answer the question, what's the main thrust of this text? Why is this text a big deal in this sense, in the sense that it's conclusive or concluding?

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Well, I think that we need to say at least what we already know. What is it that we already know? We already know that Jesus is greater than the Old Covenant. And we’re going to talk more about that as we go through this text. But it’s at least that.

So when we are told to consider Jesus, we need to say to ourselves that we’re locked into that argument that Jesus is greater than the Old Covenant that we’ve been familiar with. This is an ongoing thing and we need to take that to heart.

But what about the thrust of this text? We need to return to that question and ask what this text is about. What is the thrust? What ought we to be thinking when we think about these six verses?

Well, the answer to that is *oikos*. When you look at these six verses, there are six occurrences of this word in some form or another—*oikos*. That word gives us the emphasis for these six verses. And I’ll tell you what that word is. It’s a word that means *house* in its various forms.

So this is about architecture. These six verses are about a house. And that’s what we have to think about when we think about these six verses. Now that may be a little bit odd, but that at least starts us out.

So the question we have to ask is *what is this house?* What is this house that we’re thinking about? Well at the very least, it’s a house that belongs to God. We know that. We don’t need to extrapolate on that. We know it.

But I want to show you something. Moses is a steward in this house. We read that in the text. There’s an interesting thing that we find in this text when we come at it. There’s an Old Testament reference here. And that Old Testament reference comes in verse 2. And there is the Old Testament reference to which I am referring. It’s Numbers chapter 12 verse 7.

Now I’m going to put it on the board. I want you to just see it for a minute, and I want you to see it in comparison. In Hebrews 3:2 there’s the reference: *“just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.”* And then Numbers 12:7: *“But not so with My servant Moses. He is faithful in all My house.”*

And isn’t it interesting that when the author of Hebrews writes, he bleeds Bibline, just like John Bunyan did, right? You don’t even know that’s a reference to the Old Testament until it’s put side by side. You think, “Hey, that comes right out of Numbers chapter 12.”

And so here is a reference wherein we are being told that Moses is a steward in God’s house. Now I want you to think about this for just a minute. This is not a building. I’m not going to spend much time here today. I’m just going to state it. I’m going to tell you that we’re not dealing with a building. We’re dealing with a people. We’re dealing with the church. This is the church under age. We could call it a household.

So when God talks about Moses being a good steward in the house in the Old Testament, He’s talking about what the Westminster Confession might call *“a church under age.”* When we find that Jesus is faithful in the house, we’re talking about the household of God or the church in the New Testament, but one people of God, and one people of God that He oversees with His servants and stewards. So it’s not a building; it’s a household.

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Now you can get that from other places. But I think that the easiest place where we might pull from in order to get the idea that a house here is a household is if we just go back and look at what we’ve looked at earlier. In other words, let’s pull down some of the things that we’ve studied already.

If you look at chapter 2, it says, “*For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing*” what? “*Many sons to glory.*” Then 2:12. “*And again, ‘Behold, I and the children God has given me.’*” Bringing many sons to glory. The children God has given me.

And then 2:14: and 17L “*Therefore He had to be made like His*” what? “*Brothers in every respect.*”

Now the point I’m driving at here is that we are looking at a household, and not a house. This is a household. This is a household made of His children. And so what is the house? Well, it’s God’s family, very simple.

But here’s the thing that I would urge upon you to think about, because I want to move on to something else that’s going to hinge on this. But this is crucial. *This is a house He purchased.* In 2:16 it’s the house that He purchased by taking upon Himself the same flesh and blood that we share. So He purchased this house with His own blood, okay?

Now here is the crucial thing. This house, this family, these brothers and sisters and sons that were brought to glory, this is called *Abraham’s seed.*”

Now I just want you to think about that for a minute in light of what we’ve been talking about as the thrust or the historical context of Hebrews. I want you to think about the implication of that. What is he saying? What was the threat, first of all? The threat was what?

**Participant:** That they would fall away.

**Jeff:** That they would return to Judaism. The threat was that they would return to Judaism. And what is he telling them? He is telling them that the family that God purchased through His Son is the seed of Abraham. The sons that were brought to glory, the children among whom He stands to praise God, this is the seed of Abraham! It may not look like it. You may be in somebody’s living room while the Jews are in their temple or in their synagogues. And you’re here, you’re in this living room, and you’re worshipping cramped and crowded. But you are the seed of Abraham. That’s what he’s telling them.

And when you begin to grab that, you begin to realize that wow! This is the underlying text that becomes really the thrust of the text when you think about the house. He’s telling them, “You are the house. And by the way, you are the house that is Abraham’s seed.” That’s why it’s important. Christianity is not a sect. To return to Judaism was then to leave the house of God. To return to Judaism was to abandon the family of God. Do you see that? Does that make sense? Okay. All right, good.

In fact, he’s saying to the Jews, “We don’t deny Moses. We don’t deny the family of God. You deny him.” That’s striking in and of itself.

We need to think now about *Jesus and Moses and the relationship that they have one to another.* What is that relationship? Well, he says, “Consider Jesus, because our place in the family is because of Him.” Now that’s pretty straightforward and simple. He’s been



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telling us in chapter 2 that we’re purchased by His blood. We are in this family because of Him.

Now consider Jesus in relation to Moses. What is the interconnectedness? What is the point of similarity?

Well when you look at these two texts, one of the things that immediately jumps out to you is *faithfulness*. I want you to look at this text for a minute. He talks about this text in verse 1.

**Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.

**Jeff:** “Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him.” Here it is. Here’s the comparison. “Just as Moses also was faithful in All God’s house.”

There is a comparison to be made, right? The comparison to be made is *faithfulness*.

Now I want you to think about this. You have to go back in your mind to think about what we’re talking about when we went through chapter 1. In chapter 1 he, the author, was talking about angels and how Jesus was better than the angels, superior to the angels. And the thing that we need to remember is that he talks about Jesus being superior to them without denigrating them. In other words, he talks about Jesus being superior without pulling them down.

That’s something that I think in a sinful world we’re unfamiliar with, right? In order to build somebody else up, how do we do it? We tear them down. Not Jesus. Not the author of this text. The author of this text builds Jesus up without tearing the angels down.

And I think that you find that similar method here. He shows Jesus as superior to Moses without tearing Moses down. In other words, he says that Jesus was faithful as Moses was faithful.

But notice what he doesn’t say. He doesn’t say how faithful Moses was, isn’t that right? He just talks about his faithfulness. Jesus’ faithfulness in terms of degree far exceeds that of Moses. He doesn’t have to say it; we all know it. We all know it because we know the Scriptures.

So he compares Jesus to the angels without denigrating the angels. Angels were wonderful. Moses was faithful. But Jesus is far superior to them all. Okay?

There’s another thing here that’s really important for us to grab. And that is that *Christ is worthy of more glory*. You see that in verse 3. Christ is worthy of more glory.

Now I want you to think about this for just a minute. Do this comparison. Here’s the comparison—verse 2. Look at all the prepositions. Verse 2: Moses was faithful in the house. Verse 5: He was in the house as a faithful servant.

But now notice what we find with regard to Jesus. Verse 6: Christ is not in the house but over the house as a Son. So He’s deserving of more glory—not in, but over, deserving of more glory. It’s his subtle way of helping us to see Jesus’ position, okay?

But there’s something else I want you to catch, and it’s Moses’ intimacy with God. And we’re still thinking about glory here. We’re still thinking about glory. We’re thinking about how Jesus is more deserving of glory than is Moses. But we’re thinking about Moses and glory.

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Now when you look at Numbers chapter 12, it’s talking about Moses. I’m going to show you verse 8 in just a second. But one of the things you have to catch is that we are being told how it is that God communicates to His prophets. And God communicates to His prophets face to face.

Do you remember that wonderful story, the story of Elijah? You think about Amos, and Amos telling us how God speaks to His prophets face to face? And then the Shunamite woman comes and she has lost her child, and he sends his servant to find out what’s the matter? And she pushes by him and runs to Elijah, and Elijah says, “What’s the problem?” And she tells him and what does he say? He says, “*The LORD has not revealed this to me.*” The Lord has not shown this to me.

But the Lord speaks to His prophets face to face. There’s an intimacy between Him and His prophets, and yet His prophets aren’t omniscient. They’re not all knowing. And God is not obligated to share every piece of information with them. And yet there’s the intimacy that God has with His prophets.

Now when you see this, you’re going to see intimacy the the nth degree. It’s an intimacy that Moses shared with God. God says of Moses, “*With him I will speak mouth to mouth,*” or face to face, “*even openly, and not in dark sayings. And he beholds the form of the LORD.*” Now I don’t know about you, but that is just an incredible statement when you think about Moses.

Now let’s think for a second about Sinai. When Moses is on Mount Sinai he wants to see the glory of God. Remember that? God says, “All right. I’m going to do this for you. You can’t see Me and live,” right? So what we learned in this last frame is that God is speaking in terms of metaphor, in terms of figure, in order to say to the people of Israel that this man and I share intimacy that you don’t know. He’s on Sinai and God says, “You can’t see Me and live. But I’ll show You my afterglow.” And so He puts him in the cleft of the rock. And He passes by him and all the glory passes by. He sees God’s back side. He sees the afterglow of God’s glory.

And do you remember what happens to him as a result of that? He comes down the mountain and the people are frightened. And why are they frightened?

**Participant:** He’s glowing.

**Jeff:** He’s glowing! Now here’s the question. His face shone. The people are terrified. He’s got to put a veil on. This must have been a spectacular sight. But the question that we have to ask ourselves is what room does that leave for Jesus? In other words, if Moses has that much glory and that much intimacy with God, what do we do with Jesus?

Well I’ll tell you what we do with Jesus. We go back to chapter 1 and verse 3. We notice how the Preacher has prepared us for this. Look what he says. He tells us in chapter 1 verse 3 that “*He*”—that is the Son—“*is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of His nature.*”

In other words, think about this. Moses’ glory is derivative. But we’re told that Jesus’ glory is original. It is His because He is of the same substance as the Father. He is the exact representation of the Father, which means that He is another Person than the Father. He is not the Father in terms of Person. He is His own Person. And yet He shares the

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same substance as the Father. And so His glory is the Father’s glory, not derivatively but of His own.

I mean, when you think about it, this is woven together so tightly that you just can’t help but get excited! All right, calm down! (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** No, don’t calm down; I love it.

**Jeff:** What’s the pastoral application? You can’t go back to Judaism! If you go back to Judaism, you’re going back to what is derived!

**Participant:** Amen!

**Jeff:** But where Jesus is, that is the original glory! That’s what he’s saying. Whew! (*Laughter*) Yeah! (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Preach it, brother!

**Jeff:** Now think about this once more in verse 5. Look at what he says in the text. “Moses testified of these things to be spoken of later.” What is he reminding us of? Go back to chapter 1 again. Well let me read to you first, in verse 5. “*Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify of the things that were to be spoken later.*”

What was to be spoken later? Chapter 1 verse 1. “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things.*” That’s what he’s saying. He’s weaving in something again from chapter 1, verse 1 and following. He’s saying, “But Moses spoke of later things.” But he has already told us what those later things were. It’s Jesus! Isn’t that good? (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Just to drive this home, in chapter 1 and verses 3 which you read, if we were to replace Moses’ name in there rather than Jesus, if we were to say that Moses is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of His nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power, then we would consider that blasphemy.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely.

**Participant:** So there is no comparison.

**Jeff:** No comparison; that’s right. Absolutely. Now here’s what I want to say to you before we go on. This takes us back to something I wanted to say to you earlier. We talk about reckoning or thinking or considering. And here’s what I would say to you. Somebody might come in here and sit amongst us and say, “I don’t know why you guys are getting all excited. This is just a bunch of talk. It’s just words. With real life scenarios, how does this help me? In a real life scenario, I have trouble with my kids. I have trouble with my wife. I have trouble with my job. I have trouble with my dog. How does this help me in real life?”, right?

And in one sense we have to say to that person, “You know, you’re right.” In one sense, the gospel can’t keep you from being murdered. It can’t. And in one sense the gospel can’t keep the ultimate fear you have from happening. And the ultimate fear you have is death. It can’t keep that from happening. But what we learn from the gospel is that it can keep you from the ultimate thing that you fear, and that is the ultimate destruction of your body in hell. And there is a reward waiting for you. There’s a house to which you can belong right now. And there is a house to which you can experience all of the benefits in this world of that house.

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But they are things that aren't going to amount to much in this world. When you talk to people about your justification before God and your no longer having a guilty conscience about things that you did in the past, you know that it's not going to mean a hill of beans to some people. It's just not. But if you've ever struggled with a guilty conscience, you know how badly you want to be relieved of that struggle.

So in one sense you come in here and you don't know this and you're not familiar with all this and you just hear these words and you think. What's this guy getting all excited about? And these guys seem to be just as excited as he is. This is the strangest thing in the world. That is the person to whom these things have not become real.

And so we all know that when we're going to walk out of here we're going to struggle with people. We're going to struggle with relationships. Bad things are going to happen. We all know this.

But I'll tell you what we also know. We also have the wisdom of God to apply the situations in life. We have the forgiveness of sins and the cleansing of the conscience that can make us sit easy. At night, when we put our heads down on the pillow, we know that we have forgiveness and we can go to sleep.

There are things that we have in this world that this man can't possibly know. But these are only a foretaste of greater things yet to come. So we need to reckon these things, to count them as true.

Now let me just go on and let me hasten on to this last point. *Are you in the house?* Verse 6: “*And we are His house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*” Verse 14 says something similar. We'll not go there, but you can certainly read that.

**Transcriber's Note:** Hebrews 3:14, ESV. “*For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.*”

**Jeff:** The question is what about the perseverance of God in the saints, because I'll tell you what. When you look at that, that looks contingent. “*And we are His house if we hold fast our confidence and our boast in our hope.*” We are His house *if* these things are true of us.

Now I just want to say this to you. I believe in the perseverance of God in the saint. In other words, if God has made you alive, then you are alive. And you will not die again. You cannot commit spiritual suicide if God has brought you to life. If He has regenerated you, you are regenerate.

But this is one of those things. This is a drum I beat, and Jordan can tell you this. This is a drum I beat. I beat a drum called *union with Christ*. And when we are united to Jesus Christ, one of the things that we possess is not just the forensic benefit of forgiveness, but we possess the renovative benefit of sanctification. We have been definitively moved out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and we progressively get used to that. We progressively come to grips with it. We progressively learn the house rules of God's new house.

And that's the progressive part of it. We don't always do well. We don't always succeed. We often don't. In comparison to Christ we still look like worms. But we're growing.

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I don't think he's talking about perseverance here. I think he's asking a more fundamental question. I think he's asking are you in the house, because if you're in the house, then yes, you'll have justification. But you will hold fast to these things because you won't be able to help it! You see, that's what he's saying.

So he's not asking do we really believe in the perseverance of God in the saints? That's not what he's asking. What he's really asking is this. Are you in the house? And if you're in the house, you'll experience that because you possess all the benefits of being in the house. If you're in the house, God has done it. But are you in the house? That's the question.

And in one sense I think, oh boy, that's not a great question to end with. But it's a great question to end with, right? You ought to be asking. Am I in the house? When you get to 2 Corinthians chapter 13 5, he says, *“Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith.”* It is never a bad thing to take stock in what it is that you hold true. Am I in the house? All right. Yes, Sig?

**Sig:** I just think this adds a whole new meaning. Is Don in the house? Or as they would say at a rock 'n' roll concert, someone's in the house tonight, you know? And everyone gets excited. Oh, he's in the house, you know? But now, all of a sudden, as our membership in the body and the blood of Christ and the family of Christ, you hear your name called out. And they say, “Don is in the house. Jeff is in the house. Bill is in the house.” You blow my mind with that, because we are in God's house.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** And we don't need to get excited about Elvis or some celebrity. We are in the house of God. And Sig is in the house tonight, you know?

**Jeff:** Absolutely.

**Sig:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Amen. Don's up.

**Participant:** Wait, Don. You have to get this in your transcript.

**Don:** Yes. It's interesting to me, Jeff, that when Jesus was encountering the Pharisees in John's Gospel, the point He keeps hammering is that *“Moses wrote of Me. If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, because Moses wrote of Me.”* But if you do not believe Moses, how will you believe My words?” And that was a slam to them, because they thought, “We believe Moses.”

**Jeff:** Absolutely.

**Don:** And here Jesus is saying exactly what this author of Hebrews is saying—that Jesus surpasses Moses.

**Jeff:** Moses isn't your father. Abraham's not your father. The devil is your father.

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Over here. Why don't you make your way across here? The bishop has his hand up.

**Bishop Rodgers:** I was simply thinking of that text that says, “If they have left us, they have never been of us.”

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely.

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**Participant:** Oh I think this kind of testifies that salvation is truly a pure work of God in our lives, because we’re not going to remain unless God has already done the work in us. We will persevere. We will not give up because if He has done His work in our lives, how could we give up? That we do persevere is a testament that God has already done that work.

**Jeff:** Yes. And I’m affirming everything you say. And yet we exhort people. Don’t leave! Don’t return to Judaism, right? We talk to them about what it will mean if they’re saved. We talk to people about partial apostasy. What’s the difference between partial and full apostasy? It’s repentance. We talk to people. We warn, we exhort. We do all those things, right? We do it because we don’t know. The Westminster Confession tells us that even the person that God has redeemed can fall into sin for a time and then come back. And so we exhort and encourage and warn and even excommunicate, to give people to say, Look. We’re going to take away what you say you have a taste for. If you’re really hungry for it, you’ll come back. That’s the idea, right? Kerry, did you have your hand up?

**Kerry:** I’m trying to get through this. It’s exciting to hear this. It’s great. Are we in the house? It’s not like an old established firm. We can’t afford to take chances. If we’re in the house, what is the will? It’s the whole gospel. My God He was. My God He is. My God He’s always going to be. There are people who haven’t a clue, egotistic. It doesn’t matter if I’m in the house. It matters what He’s doing in my life, through me to other people.

**Participant:** It does matter if you’re in the house.

**Jeff:** Well if you’re in the house, you’ll be inviting other people in.

**Kerry:** In some way or another. I cannot give wonderful speeches. I can’t do anything. But I trust that Christ is working in me and through me. And we’ve got to take chances. We’ve got to reach out. And it’s through Christ, not through me, because I’m not going to do anything. What has been done has already been done. He knew me from the beginning of the world. I believe that.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Yes. Anybody else? Okay. Let’s pray and we’ll close out. Our heavenly Father, we thank You for this time and for the day You’ve given. We thank You for the privilege of gathering and being in Your word. Lord, we trust that it’s a means of Your grace. And we trust that having been under it and through it that You’ll continue to do Your work because of it in our lives. And Father, we thank You for the Holy Spirit who resides in us if we are in the house, for indeed He has placed us in that house, building us up one to another. And we pray that that would continue. And we pray, Father, that You would continue to add to the house to Your glory, for we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)