

## JESUS' SUPERIORITY OVER MOSES IN HEBREWS 3:1-6

Brett R. Scott

Hebrews 3:1–6 compares Jesus with Moses in order to lay a foundation for the exhortation that follows in 3:7–4:11.<sup>1</sup> The comparison points up three important truths. First, the Old Covenant has been surpassed and superseded by the New Covenant. Second, the limited access to God through a human mediator (only Moses was given face-to-face access to God) has been surpassed by the provision of direct access to God for all His people. Third, though both Moses and Jesus were faithful in their positions, the access secured by Moses as a faithful servant of God has been far surpassed by the access to God enjoyed by Jesus, God's Son. The contrast between Jesus and Moses serves as a rhetorical device to persuade the readers to accept the New Covenant, to enjoy their direct access to God, and to recognize Jesus Christ as the faithful Mediator between God and humans.

The contrast is not polemical in purpose,<sup>2</sup> for that would denigrate Moses<sup>3</sup> in order to exalt Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Nor does the Book of Hebrews denigrate the Old Covenant; rather it seeks to exalt the New Covenant, the subject of the discourse. Also rather than denigrating the access Moses had to God, Hebrews exalts the access believers now have to God. And instead of denigrating the faithfulness of Moses as servant, Hebrews exalts the faithfulness of

Brett R. Scott is a Teaching Assistant of Biblical Greek and New Testament, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio, and Instructor of Biblical Greek, Hosanna Bible Training Center, Macedonia, Ohio.

<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 104.

<sup>2</sup> David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 215.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 203. Cf. William L. Lane, *Hebrews*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1991), cxxviii; and deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 281.

<sup>4</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 105.

Christ as Son both now and forever. "Christ's superiority to Moses aims not at disqualifying the latter as a servant within God's house, but rather at enhancing the honor of the former as Son over God's house (Heb 3:5)."<sup>5</sup> Moses' intimacy with the Law (the Old Covenant), his face-to-face access to God, and his position as a faithful servant in God's house served as a "type" of the One to come who would be greater in all these areas.

Structurally Hebrews 3:1–6 "is a very complex midrashic treatment of a number of texts,"<sup>6</sup> launching a larger section of 3:7–5:10, whose theme is the "high priestly character of the Son."<sup>7</sup> The shift in 3:7 from exposition to exhortation shows the author's skill in combining exposition with exhortation.<sup>8</sup> Therefore "an appreciation of the vital interrelationship between exposition and exhortation is crucial to an adequate understanding of the function of either component of the discourse."<sup>9</sup>

The rhetorical device of comparison (*συνκρίσις*) is used prominently throughout the epistle (Jesus/angels, Jesus/Joshua, New Covenant/Old Covenant, Old Testament sacrifices/Christ's once-for-all sacrifice, and others) and is the main device used in 3:1–6 (Jesus/Moses).<sup>10</sup> According to Aristotle, to achieve rhetorical success the subject (here Jesus) must be compared "with illustrious personages for it affords ground for amplification and is noble, if he (the subject) can be proved better than men of worth."<sup>11</sup> This passage focuses the comparison "on a scriptural attested quality of Moses (Old Testament: Exod, Lev, Num, Deut; New Testament: Acts 7:17–44), his fidelity, which provides the basis for the exhortation that follows"<sup>12</sup> in 3:7–4:11.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE JESUS/MOSES COMPARISON: HEBREWS 3:1

At first, comparing Jesus to Moses may seem anticlimactic after the author of Hebrews established Jesus' superiority to angels. "It would seem to go without saying that he is greater than Moses."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 215.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Rose D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1979), 68.

<sup>7</sup> Lane, *Hebrews* 1-8, 68.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, c, 69.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, c.

<sup>10</sup> deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* 1.9.38-39.

<sup>12</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 105.

<sup>13</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 194.

However, in first-century Jewish thought Moses was held in almost God-like esteem, even higher than angels. So contrasting Jesus to Moses is a step beyond 1:5–13, not a step backward. The comparison "was not simply a literary exercise that enabled the writer to speak of the excellence of Jesus or to exhibit his own exegetical skill. . . . He [the writer] chose to acknowledge the faithfulness of Moses because this appears to have been a significant consideration to the men and women whom he addressed."<sup>14</sup>

The comparison was also bound to arise in the minds of first-century Christians, for the name of Moses appears more times in the Old Testament and in fact in all of the Bible (847 total times: 762 in the Old Testament and 85 in the New Testament) than any other proper name except for Jesus and David. Indeed the comparison may go back to Jesus Himself (Matt. 5:21–48; Mark 10:1–12; 14:24), in addition to early Christian preaching (Acts 3:22–23; 7:17–44), Paul (2 Cor. 3; Gal. 3:19), and John (John 1:17; Rev. 15:3).<sup>15</sup>

#### MOSES' BACKGROUND

To the Jews, Moses was "the greatest person who ever lived: it was through Moses that God delivered Israel from Egypt, constituted Israel as a nation, and brought Israel the Law."<sup>16</sup> Around 180 B.C., Ben Sira wrote of Moses' celebrated honor in the eyes of those living in the first century. Ben Sira described Moses' "favor in the eyes of all," his being beloved by all humanity and "by God and people," and that he was made "equal of the holy ones in glory," that is, the angels (Sir. 45:1–6).<sup>17</sup> The Wisdom of Solomon also paints a rather exalted picture of Moses by referring to him as "a servant of the Lord" (Wis. of Sol. 10:16) and a "holy prophet" (11:1). And 4 Maccabees 9:2 refers to Moses as "our counselor." Josephus wrote, "The wisest of the Greeks learnt to adopt the conception of God from the principles with which Moses supplied them."<sup>18</sup> Barrett, commenting on this quotation, states, "The notion that the best philosophy was plagiarized from Moses was current long before Josephus (e.g. in the Jewish apologist Aristo-

<sup>14</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 79-80.

<sup>15</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 194.

<sup>16</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 1990), 60. However, Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest man born of women (Matt. 11:11).

<sup>17</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 194, and D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 96-149. The rabbinic tradition provides ample evidence for the belief that Moses was held in higher esteem than the angels.

<sup>18</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.164-71.

bus).<sup>19</sup> Philo referred to Moses as king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet; the "best of kings"; a man of "special holiness"; "the holiest of men"; and "the holy prophet."<sup>20</sup>

In the words of Williamson, "Apart altogether from Philo's eulogies, Moses was recognised by his countrymen to be their great deliverer, the giver of God's holy Law, a unique prophet."<sup>21</sup> Moses was regarded in the first century as "the supreme example of perfection in the sense of immediacy and access to God,"<sup>22</sup> a man "bigger than life" in the eyes of the people at the time of the writing of this epistle. As Lane wrote, "It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Moses in Judaism, and the veneration with which he was regarded."<sup>23</sup>

### JESUS' BACKGROUND: APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST

From the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews the author established in the minds of his audience the supreme honor of Jesus.<sup>24</sup> This rhetorical method of establishing the supremacy of the subject to be exalted is similar to the way in which the supremacy of Christ is exalted early in Paul's letter to the Colossians.<sup>25</sup>

In Hebrews 3:1 Jesus is identified as the believers' Apostle (ἀπόστολος) and High Priest (ἀρχιερεύς). These two titles are not used of Jesus anywhere else in the New Testament.<sup>26</sup> The high priest was chosen by God to provide access to Him for humanity and to represent God to humanity. According to Josephus the title "high priest" is the "most honored of revered names,"<sup>27</sup> and Philo claimed that priests are invested with dignity and honor belonging to kings.<sup>28</sup> Jesus is also called high priest in Hebrews 2:17 and 10:21. Contrasts between the Levitical priesthood and Jesus' priesthood are stated throughout the epistle. The title "apostle" seems a bit more obscure. Though an unusual term to apply to Je-

<sup>19</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 284.

<sup>20</sup> *Of the Life of Moses* 2.92; 187, 201; *Of Cherubim* 45; *Allegories of the Laws* 3.185.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 461.

<sup>22</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 74.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 211.

<sup>25</sup> This rhetorical method is often used in modern worship services, in which the supremacy of Christ is exalted through music as a precursor to the message being presented.

<sup>26</sup> Justin Martyr, though, called Christ an ἀπόστολος (*Apologia* 1.12.9; 63.5–10).

<sup>27</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish Wars* 4.146.

<sup>28</sup> Philo, *Of Special Laws* 1.142.

sus, it alludes to His accepted role as the Messenger or "sent one."<sup>29</sup> In secular language an "apostle" is an ambassador,<sup>30</sup> one sent with delegated authority. Applied to Christ, it has a "plenipotentiary" meaning as an ambassador with full powers, God's ambassador.<sup>31</sup> This reference to Jesus as "apostle" also connotes that He bears God's revelation to humankind (1:1-2; 2:1-4).

Under the Old Covenant Moses and Aaron would perhaps have been regarded as apostle and high priest respectively, but under the New Covenant the two offices are combined in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup> The two titles complement each other: Jesus is "the sent one" (ἀπόστολος) from the Father, and He is "the provider of access to God" (ἀρχιερεύς) for humanity.

#### EXEGESIS OF THE JESUS/MOSES COMPARISON:

##### HEBREWS 3:2-6

These verses emphasize three foundational themes: covenant, access to God, and faithfulness.

The theme of οἶκος ("house") is used throughout this passage: the faithfulness of Jesus to the house of God is greater than Moses' faithfulness (v. 2); the honor of Jesus as the builder of the house is greater than Moses' honor (v. 3); a parenthetical extension of the "house" analogy is introduced regarding God, the builder of all things (v. 4);<sup>33</sup> Jesus is the Son over the house whereas Moses was a servant in the house (vv. 5-6); and believers are described as "God's house" (v. 6). The author "could have stressed that Moses was not faithful (Num. 20:12)."<sup>34</sup> However, Moses' faithfulness is acknowledged because of the high regard in which he was held in the first century.<sup>35</sup> The statement in Hebrews 3:5 that Moses was faithful in all God's house alludes to Numbers 12:7, where God said, "My servant Moses . . . is faithful in all My household." Here God's house means the sphere of Moses' stewardship, the household, comprising in this case the whole "family" of Israel.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 107; and Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 75.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), 52.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 79-80. As stated earlier, to stress Moses' unfaithfulness would have served a polemical purpose (a purpose the author of Hebrews did not have in mind).

<sup>35</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 130-31.

The metaphor of God's people as a household is widespread in the New Testament. Paul and other New Testament writers used the term "family" to include all people who believe on Jesus (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17).

The six New Testament references to "house" vary in meaning between a building, a household, a family, and a nation.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the Scriptures and other ancient writings the Greek word οἶκος has several meanings: the temple (Acts 7:47; 1 Kings 3:2; 6:1–7:51; 8:16–18; and Josephus, *The Jewish Wars* 4.4.5, 281); various communal groups or "households" (Ps. 114:1; Jer. 12:7; 31:31 [cited in Heb. 8:8]; Hos. 9:15; Matt. 10:6; 15:24; and Acts 2:36); the Davidic dynasty (Luke 1:27, 69; 2:4); and various Jewish and Christian communities (Qumran 1 QS 8:5–9; 9:6).<sup>38</sup>

Hebrews 3:4 refers to God as the builder of everything (cf. Gen. 14:19; Ps. 127:1). The greatest honor is to be paid to the one who conceived, designed, and built the universe,<sup>39</sup> namely, God. The Epistle to the Hebrews is not suggesting that Jesus is the builder of the house, but that God the Father is the builder of "all things" (πάντα, Heb. 1:2b; 2:10). Of course God created all things through Jesus (1:2c).

Three parallels serve as a background to the Jesus/Moses comparison: Moses delivered the Israelites from the bondage of slavery and Egypt, while Jesus delivered all believers from the bondage of sin and damnation (2:14–15). Through Moses, God constituted the Israelites as the people of God, while Jesus constitutes all believers as the sons of God (2:10). Moses brought the Israelites the Old Covenant, whereas Jesus brings all believers into the New Covenant, establishing a greater access to God for them (4:14–16), which had been only for Israel until Jesus came. In Jesus' superiority He replaced—and exceeded—all Moses did.

The three foundations are elaborated on in the following sections of this article. Each foundation is actually an integral part of the entire epistle. Hebrews includes fifty-six allusions to the covenant (oath, Law, etc.), twenty-six allusions to access to God, and fifty-four allusions to faithfulness.

## THE "COVENANT" THEME

Jesus' superiority over Moses and the establishment of His high priesthood leads to the bold conclusion that the Old Covenant has

<sup>37</sup> Ellingworth and Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews*, 53; and Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 196. "Two main ideas are involved, that of community and that of structure."

<sup>38</sup> Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 108-109.

<sup>39</sup> Ray C. Stedman, *Hebrews*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 48; and Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 110.

been replaced (7:12, 18; 8:6-7, 13; 10:9). To establish the New Covenant and show it valid, the argument must be considered that the One bringing in the New Covenant is greater than Moses, who brought in the Old Covenant. Now that Jesus' priesthood replaced that of Levi, the Law of Moses must also be replaced because it was the legal basis of the Levitical priesthood (7:11-19). To the Jews, the Law was given the highest honor over everything except God Himself. Moses not only wrote the books of the Law, but Moses and the Law are intertwined throughout the Scriptures, almost inseparably. Twenty-one times in the Scriptures the Law is called the Law of Moses, and in the New Testament, Moses' name is used synonymously with the Law (Matt. 8:4; 19:8; 22:24; Mark 7:10; 10:4; Luke 16:31; 24:27; Acts 6:11; 15:21; 21:21; 2 Cor. 3:15).

The connections drawn between the sacrifices and the Law and between the offering of Christ and the will of God are extraordinarily important. They also prepare for the revolutionary statement that the Old Covenant has been annulled with the arrival of the New. The author of Hebrews validated this bold statement by appealing to the Old Testament (Ps. 40:6-8; Jer. 31:31-34). The Old Covenant was a necessary but provisional episode in the accomplishment of redemptive history. However, with the entrance of the New Covenant the Old was set aside.

For both Jesus and the New Testament authors the prophecy of a new covenant was of paramount importance.<sup>40</sup> As Bruce writes, "It is the Epistle to the Hebrews that chiefly presents the pattern of promise and fulfillment in terms of the two covenants."<sup>41</sup> Jesus is referred to as the Mediator or Guarantor of a New Covenant in Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; and 12:24. The first covenant had a mediator (Gal. 3:19-20), but no surety is mentioned in connection with it. The New Covenant has a greater Mediator who is a surety (Guarantor) because by His blood His people are sanctified (Heb. 10:14, 29) and the eternal covenant (13:20) is established, never to be superseded by another.<sup>42</sup> Jesus presented Himself as an unblemished offering, following the Law's requirements for a sacrificial victim (9:14; Exod. 29:1; Lev. 1:3).<sup>43</sup> However, even

<sup>40</sup> Henry M. Shires, *Finding the Old Testament in the New* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 111.

<sup>41</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 55. "Perhaps, however, it is going too far to conceive of the contents of the Epistle solely, or even mainly, in terms of the covenant principle. Yet the contrast between the old covenant and the new makes a substantial contribution to the argument" (ibid.).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>43</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/Knox), 150.

though both the Levitical sacrifice and Jesus' offering of Himself have to do with providing satisfaction to God for sin, the Levitical law never required a human victim.<sup>44</sup> The New Covenant is established by sacrifice, but it is a new and unique kind of sacrifice, namely, the death of Jesus Christ, as explained and validated by the author's quotation of Psalm 40:6-8.

#### THE "ACCESS TO GOD" THEME

For believers, Christ is their divine Mediator (or "broker" in terms of the patron-client relationships that existed in the first-century world). In the patronal society of the ancient Mediterranean world, "those who dispense second-order resources [i.e., strategic contacts or access to patrons] are brokers."<sup>45</sup> Seen in the capacity of a "broker," Jesus secures favor from God on behalf of those committed to Him.<sup>46</sup> Believers have access through Christ, their Mediator, to God, greatest of all patrons.

To have access to the house of a patron through a servant is good; however, to have access to the house through a son is far better. A son, more than a servant in a house, would be sought after as a mediator to the ruler of the house.<sup>47</sup> "The role of a servant and of a son in a house are worlds apart."<sup>48</sup> The subject of servant and son is taken up in greater detail in the section on faithfulness.

The removal of the barrier between God and human beings is an important theme in Hebrews. This removal involves the cleansing of one's guilty conscience as a prerequisite for unhindered access to God (Heb. 10:22).<sup>49</sup> "The Jews then were not able to see the face of Moses glorified, and this although he was their fellow slave and kinsman. But you have seen the face of Christ in his glory. And Paul cries out: We with unveiled faces gaze upon the glory of the Lord."<sup>50</sup> Just as priests going in to sacrifice "crossed the boundary lines into the perilous zone of the holy . . . for the benefit of the whole people,"<sup>51</sup> so believers have been allowed to cross this great boundary between God and man through the "once-for-all sacrifice" of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>44</sup> deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 231.

<sup>45</sup> David A. deSilva, "Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Client Relationships," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 93.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>48</sup> Stedman, *Hebrews*, 49.

<sup>49</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 261.

<sup>50</sup> John Chrysostom, *Catechesis* 3.25, from *Huit Catecheses Baptismales*, cited in D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 263.

<sup>51</sup> Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 83.



## THE "FAITHFULNESS" THEME

In Hebrews, both Jesus and Moses are portrayed as faithful. The statement that Moses was faithful in God's house (Heb. 3:2, 5) alludes to Numbers 12:7, where God said, "My servant Moses . . . is faithful in all My household."<sup>52</sup> Jesus was faithful in God's house in His superior position of Son. Thus the contrast is not between the faithfulness of Jesus and Moses, but between the position in which each was faithful. If the contrast had been the superior faithfulness of Jesus over Moses, Moses' unfaithfulness in Egypt (Exod. 2:11–12) and at the rock of Meribah (Num. 20:10–12) would surely have been presented as evidence. In fact in Hebrews, Moses' faithfulness is commended (Heb. 3:2, 5; 11:23–28). The contrast is between the position of a servant and that of a son and the difference in the resulting access (or mediation) provided. Moses as a faithful servant provided a certain level of access to God. However, believers, as already stated, have the Son as their Mediator of God's favor. Greater is the favor assured by Jesus, for He stands in closest proximity to God, actually bearing the reflected radiance of God's glory (1:3).<sup>53</sup> Moses was faithful in (ἐν) God's house as a servant (θεράπων<sup>54</sup>), whereas Christ is faithful as a son (υἱός) over (ἐπί) God's house (3:5-6). Jesus is more highly honored than Moses, not because Moses' faithfulness was in any way defective,<sup>55</sup> but because Jesus occupies a higher office,<sup>56</sup> as Son, High Priest, King, and Mediator of a greater covenant. "Each is πιστός appointed/faithful as leader or head of the people, but the former as servant, the later as son."<sup>57</sup>

Psalm 116 extols God for His faithfulness, showing that praise is the proper response to God's infinite faithfulness (vv. 14,

<sup>52</sup> Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 130-31. However, D'Angelo tends to think the reference here and elsewhere may also point to 1 Chronicles 17:14 (LXX) (*Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 92). However, as Ellingworth says, D'Angelo's suggestion may mean 1 Chronicles 17:14 is only a secondary allusion (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 194-95, 201). Furthermore references to Moses as God's "servant" are plentiful in the Scriptures (Exod. 4:10; 14:31; Num. 11:1; Deut. 3:24; Josh 1:2).

<sup>53</sup> deSilva, "Exchanging Favor for Wrath," 96.

<sup>54</sup> θεράπων occurs only here in the New Testament. The term normally used is δοῦλος ("bondslave"). "The term θεράπων does not have the same pejorative connotation of forced servitude as does δοῦλος, which is used in those (other) passages" (Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 111). Cf. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Hebrews in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 71. θεράπων speaks of service that is of a nobler and freer character than that of δοῦλος.

<sup>55</sup> As noted previously, Moses' unfaithfulness is not considered in this passage.

<sup>56</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 203.

<sup>57</sup> D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, 92.

18). Similarly believers today should respond to the faithfulness of Jesus by expressing gratitude and by being faithful. In Hebrews 10:19–36 readers are challenged to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering" (v. 23), to spur one another on and encourage each other (vv. 24–25), to stand firm (v. 32), and to persevere (v. 36).

Hebrews 3:1–6 points to Jesus' supreme honor, faithfulness, and access to God the Father as a High Priest, and His position as Apostle and Son. Therefore in view of His superiority, believers, having entered a New Covenant with God, have gained greater access to Him than was ever possible under the Old Covenant. In response believers should be faithful to Him and should hold fast to their confession of, their hope in, and their faith in "Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, Heb. 12:2).

Jesus did away with the Old Covenant and replaced it with a new one only after He fully satisfied and fulfilled the Old Covenant by His righteous death as a "once-for-all" sacrifice for sins (10:10). As a "boundary crosser" who entered the holy place, Jesus is also a "trailblazer" or "pioneer" (ἀρχηγὸν) who leads many sons and daughters into glory (2:10; 12:2).<sup>58</sup> As a result believers have "confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh" (10:19–20). "When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete" (8:13). If the servant's (Moses') prayers offered on behalf of the people were answered, "how much more" will the prayers of the Son offered for believers be answered. The closeness of the Son to the Father is passed on to those who believe, so that they receive greater access to God than Moses experienced. Believers enjoy "so much more" the benefits of sonship now that they are heirs and adopted children of God. Therefore the writer to the Hebrews exhorted his readers, "Let us hold unswervingly [καρέχωμεν] to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (10:23, NIV).

Hughes suggests that these truths may best be "summed up for us by Herveus, an expositor of the twelfth century: 'For it has been shown that Christ is far more noble than Moses, so that we should cling to Christ alone, in whom we have all things.'"<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 150.

<sup>59</sup> Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 140.

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