

More Faithful Than Moses

F AITHFULNESS! This is a characteristic I want in my life. It is true of Jesus. The scriptures tell us that Jesus was faithful in all that He has done for us - His birth, ministry, death and being our High Priest in heaven. He is faithful to the Father and to us! Have you ever wondered if Jesus would really save you and forgive you, even when you were unfaithful? 2 Tim. 2:13 encourages us with, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (NASB). He is faithful because He promised to be faithful (Hebrews 10:23). He is faithful to limit our temptations to something we can handle (1 Cor. 10:13), and when we do sin, He is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). He has promised to protect us from the evil one (2 Thess. 3:3), and He is faithful to guarantee our salvation (1 Thess 5:24). He is faithful!

FAITHFULNESS. The faithfulness of Jesus is the next picture the Holy Spirit paints in Hebrews. But first, we must remember that the readers to whom Hebrews was written have been warned that they may not be real Christians. The Holy Spirit has had to remind them as to who Jesus really is. He has compared Jesus to the angels and showed them that Jesus was superior. This was important because it appears they highly respected the angels as authoritative and in control. But He showed them that Jesus was greater than the angels since He was God - He was the final authority. So the Holy Spirit warned them to "pay much closer attention" to Jesus and encouraged them to come to Jesus, to someone who cared for them and was trustworthy, because He was a merciful and faithful high priest. They needed to hear that Jesus cared for them and was dependable.

Now the Holy Spirit calls them to respond to Jesus and at the same time shows them why they can trust Jesus.

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. (NASB) Heb. 3:1-2

Notice that He calls them "holy brethren" and says they are "partakers of a heavenly calling." Does it sound like they are Christians? Paul the apostle called the Corinthians "saints"-

holy ones - in 2 Corinthians 1:1. Then at the end of the book he encouraged them to examine themselves to see if they were really Christians.

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test? (NASB) 2 Cor. 13:5

Most of these folks were Christians; but as we will see later, there are reasons to wonder about them.

LOOKING CLOSELY. The Holy Spirit is urging them to "consider" Jesus. The root Greek word, *katanoeo*, has the idea of "looking more closely." These folks must have been really surprised to hear the words, "Look more closely." They might have been insulted, even offended. I have discovered that when I have challenged people with "Are you really a Christian?" some people are offended. It does not matter if I am counseling someone, teaching or preaching, there are those who are offended by the question. So it is possible that some of these Jewish people responded with, "I am a Christian, what do you mean that I should consider Jesus?" But as we will see, their conduct left reason to doubt they were really true. It is the person who is offended that I am most concerned about. Every Christian should be willing to honestly test himself or herself.

The next truth that God wanted them to see is that Jesus

is greater than Moses. The Jews almost worshiped him. Scripture tells us that Moses was the greatest prophet in Israel (Deut. 34:10). He was the most humble man on the earth during his life time (Num. 12:3). He had given them the Ten Commandments and the Law (Nehemiah 9:13-14). Moses had spoken with God face-to-face (Ex. 33:11). Moses knew God (Ps 103:7). Consequently, the Jews considered Moses to be the final authority (Matt. 17:3). Listen to how the apostle James refers to scripture,

“For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”
(NASB) Acts 15:21

We would say the Old Testament or scripture is preached, but James says Moses is preached. He used “Moses” in place of the word “scripture.” Now that is authoritative. Moses had been honored by God, and he was respected by the Jews because he had been faithful to God even when the Israelites were not.

Moses is an example of faithfulness to us. Faithfulness in the Christian life is a necessity. We should be more faithful as time goes on - not less. This is illustrated by a famous horse race. The horse was Secretariat. He won the Kentucky Derby. He won by running each successive quarter-mile in the race faster than the one before. The longer the race went, the faster the horse ran. That is faithful endurance. We are called to have this type of faithfulness. Jesus did!

WORTHY OF MORE GLORY. These Jewish Christians had not really thought about what they were doing. Going back to Judaism was a mistake. They were going back to someone who was not as faithful as Jesus. They were going back to Moses, but they did not realize it. So the Holy Spirit needed to remind them that Jesus was superior to one they greatly admired.

For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are . . . (NASB) Heb. 3:3-6

The Holy Spirit uses an illustration of a house with a servant and its owner. The illustration is simple. The servant of a house is not greater than the owner since he is a servant. Jesus is the builder, and Moses is the servant. God considered both of them to be faithful, but Jesus is more faithful since He is the builder of the house. Who is the house in this illustration? The Spirit says the “house” is a symbol for all Christians - the body of Christ. Who is Jesus if He is the builder of the house? The passage makes a significant statement about Jesus when it says that God is the builder of the house. That means Jesus is God. What a statement! This passage clearly explains that Jesus is God. Are you looking for a black and white statement that Jesus is God? Here it is! He is the Son who cares for the house. So Jesus is the owner or builder, but Moses was only a servant. Both were faithful, but Jesus is superior to Moses. These Jewish Christians



were making a mistake.

HOLDING ON. Remember that the author of Hebrews called them “holy brethren” in verse 1? He used words that implied these people were Christians. He even said they were “partakers of a heavenly calling.” But there is doubt that they will all be in Jesus’ house (John 14:2) because they are considering going back. So the author warns them to not go back. They must “hold on.”

. . . if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. (NASB) Heb. 3:6

Does this sound like a Christian can lose his or her salvation? Some think so! If you are wondering too, a few Greek words will help. The root Greek word for “hold fast” is *katecho*, which means “to retain” or “to grasp.” So we get the idea “to hold fast.” The root Greek word for “firm” is *bebaios*. It means “steadfast, secure or binding.” So the verse implies that we must grasp or hold on to salvation securely until the end. In just a few verses, we find Hebrews 3:14 has the same idea and uses almost the same words.

For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; (NASB) Heb. 3:14

But here the Greek word for “become,” *ginomai*, is the key to our puzzle. It is a perfect indicative active verb. This means that the one who holds on fast is a person who became a Christian and continues to be a Christian. The perfect tense is a ray of light. Once the ray of light leaves the sun, it continues traveling forever in outer space. This is the mark of true Christians. They continue believing and believing. They hold on to Jesus - firm - until the end. This is not a new teaching found only in the book of Hebrews.

JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION. Many New Testament passages tell us that the mark of a true Christian is that he or she continues in the faith. Here are two examples.

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (NASB) Matt. 10:22

... if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under

heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (NASB) Col. 1:23

... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (NASB) Rev. 2:10

These verses echo the Lord’s teaching of the sower of the seed in Matthew 13:19-23. In the parable, the Lord tells us about four types of soil: soil on the side of the road, rocky soil, thorny soil, and good soil. The soil by the road side is symbolic of people who hear the Word of God and do not understand it.

The rocky soil represents the person who hears the Word of God joyfully but because of persecutions and trials does not continue. This person cannot accept rejection, slander, insults, and trials as a Christian. This person was never real because he or she “immediately” fell away.

The third soil - soil with thorns - symbolizes people who are not really Christians. Money, possessions, and worries of the world cause them to leave. This person is described as becoming “unfruitful.”

The last soil is good soil. This person hears the Word and “ bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty” (Matt. 13:23). This person is the true Christian. The true Christian continues and produces fruit in his/her life. Riches, persecution and the trials of life may impact the true Christian but true Christians continue in the faith. This is the message of 1 John 2:19.

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. (NASB) 1 John 2:19

Christians Will Continue In The Faith

Matt. 10:21-23
 Matt. 24:8-13
 Mark 13:13
 Luke 9:62
 John 8:31-32
 John 10:27
 Acts 14:21-22
 Rom. 2:6-7
 1 Cor. 9:24-27
 2 Cor. 6:1-5
 Col. 1:22-23
 1 Tim. 4:16
 1 Tim. 6:12
 2 Tim. 2:12
 2 Tim. 4:7
 Heb. 3:14
 Heb. 10:23
 James 1:12
 1Pet. 1:6-9
 2 Pet. 1:5-11
 2 Pet. 3:17
 1 John 2:19
 Rev. 2:10, 25-26
 Rev. 3:10

1 John 2:19 simply says that true Christians continue. If a person leaves the Christian faith - stops believing in Jesus or rejects Christ - he or she was never real, but was one of the three bad soils. Can a Christian stray from the faith and still be a Christian? The answer according to Hebrews and the entire New Testament is no. Remember the perfect tense of "become partakers" in Hebrews 3:14? The perfect tense of "become" means that a true partaker is one who starts and continues to the end. A person who leaves the faith was never a Christian from the start.

CONCLUSION. So why warn them? The book of Hebrews is written to people who must have thought they were Christians, but their lives did not match. That is why the Holy Spirit called them to consider Jesus! He called them to "pay attention!" He told them that Jesus had spoken in the last days! The Holy Spirit was calling them to evaluate themselves! There was reason to doubt they were real. We will see

the marks of a true Christian in the chapters to follow.

For now, we need to honestly ask ourselves, "How am I doing?" "Does my heart reveal that I love God?" "What is more important to me? Money and possessions? Movies, music, men, women, cars, or food? Acceptance from friends? Does my heart really want to know Him? Do I go to church regularly or just when I want to? Do I want to go to church? Am I faithful like Jesus was faithful?"

Jesus is merciful and faithful. He is our great high priest. He is waiting for each of us! Hebrews is a warning! Jesus is merciful and faithful. Are we? If you are not sure you are real and you have been claiming to be a Christian, ask Him to help you know for sure.