

The Book of Hebrews

Part 7: The Voice of Sonship (Heb. 3:2-14)

I. The End Purpose of Moses

This letter has led us into some breathtaking truths. At its heart is the revelation that we are God's holy children, invited to come and sit at the table of the Trinity. With this is an urgent call to fasten our thoughts onto the One who makes this possible—Jesus our High Priest.

In the next portion, the author will build his case further as he compares Christ to Moses. This will lead to even more astounding truths of what Christ has come to reveal:

2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. 3 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. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

**5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.
(Hebrews 3:2-6)**

The writer of Hebrews started by saying Christ is greater than the angels. Now he shifts to saying Christ is greater than Moses (the one to whom angels delivered the Law according to Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:11).

The writer begins by honoring Moses, revealing that he is not in any way diminishing Moses's divinely inspired work. Moses was faithful as a servant to do some very specific things.

For people familiar with Moses, the mention of a "house" relates to his work in building and overseeing the tented "house of God" called the Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31). The entire priesthood, from the High Priest down, revolved around this important structure.

The writer says Christ came as a "*Son over His house,*" which speaks to the end purpose of Moses's work and what it was always pointing to.

Like the Temple designed after it, the Tabernacle had three parts corresponding to a human being—body, soul, spirit. The Tabernacle was a large structure that spoke to our spirit and soul tabernacling in the "tent" of our bodies (see 2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

God's ultimate house was always about human beings filled with his glory (see John 1:14 & 1 Corinthians 6:19)—hence, the words, "*Whose house we are.*" We are vessels for the glory of God to manifest through. We are his children, heirs of his presence, carriers of His Spirit's DNA.

Fittingly, the word for house here is *oikos*, a word that can be translated as a household or family.

"Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later." The history and work of the Tabernacle was testifying to a greater reality "*to be spoken later.*" This brings us back to what was established at the very beginning of the letter:

**1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...
(Hebrews 1:1-2)**

Or, as we've learned, this can also be translated as:

**But to us living in these last days, God now speaks to us openly in the language of a Son...
(Hebrews 1:2 TPT)**

God has now spoken to us in the language of sonship.

The author of Hebrews is writing this letter to let them know that time has come. The "*Son over His house*" has put an end to the prophetic testimony of Moses and his tabernacle/temple system with its priesthood and sacrifices. This entire Old Covenant arrangement was like a placenta that was necessary for a season to prepare humanity for her true birth as God's child.

The message is now calling us to come away from the law and other religious systems—and to wake up to the sound of his voice which is speaking of our true and divine nature.

II. The Key to Spiritual Growth

This passage says we are the true house and family of God—*if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*

Many read these verses as implying God will kick us out of the family *if* we stop believing. Considering the Gospel message unfolding before us, there may be a better way to read this. It could be saying that we will not demonstrate the glory of being God's children *if we don't grow in confidence that this is who we are in the first place!*

The "*confidence*" in this passage speaks of someone who can speak and act freely, a person who is at rest with himself and his place within a household. The "*the boast of our hope*" adds an even stronger layer of boldness and joy.

This letter was written to people who were being tempted to go back to an old, fear-based system of works. In a way, the author is meeting them at their level, speaking some of the old language in order to wake them up to the truth. This comes with some irony considering these stern warnings are telling them to be overjoyed with a bold and cheerful confidence about who they are and who Christ is.

In the next set of verses, the writer will continue to call them not to miss out on the undeniably good news of Christ—much like the Hebrews missed out on incredible blessings during the time of Moses.

7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, “They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know my ways”; 11 as I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.”

(Hebrews 3:7-11)

The Hebrews are being called to truly listen to what God is now speaking. The author warns them about resisting “His voice.” Recall once more that God’s voice is speaking something very specific:

But to us living in these last days, God now speaks to us openly in the language of a Son!

God is speaking the revelation of *sonship* over us!

The author is saying: *Today, do not harden your hearts against the voice speaking your true identity—the reality that you are his treasured daughter, his beloved son, the one with whom he is so happy and pleased!*¹

This gives context and understanding to the next few verses:

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

(Hebrews 3:12-13)

An “*evil, unbelieving heart*” is one that allows condemnation to fill it. This is developed further in the core summary of the book—Hebrews 10:

¹ The same revelation is residing in Jesus’s strong words to the straying Laodicean church: “*All those I dearly love I unmask and train. So repent (change your mind/perspective) and be eager to pursue what is right. Behold, I’m standing at the door, knocking. If your heart is open to hear my voice and you open the door within (you open your heart in trust), I will come in to you and feast with you, and you will feast with me*” (Revelation 3:19-20 TPT, parenthesis mine). We are called to hear his voice, which is also compared to a sword (Eph. 6:17, Heb. 4:12 & Rev. 19:15). This is the revelation that cuts away your false self. It is the message that our old selves died with Christ our High Priest. We are raised with him, restored as daughters and sons.

**22 Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience...
(Hebrews 10:22)**

An “*evil heart*” is one that is stained with an “*evil conscience*,” which means it has not found rest in the blood of Christ and the reality of God’s eternal forgiveness.

This is all about the sin of unbelief. This is what the “*deceitfulness of sin*” in this passage is about. When we resist the truth of our union with Christ, resisting his voice of our identity, we stay stuck in lesser identities. (We will see this affirmed in the next session when we take more time to explore the connection being made to the Hebrews wandering 40 years in the wilderness because they rejected news that seemed too good to be true.)

III. *Hypostasis*: Holding to Your True Essence

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

These are similar words to the call to “*hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*” But in this we find an even deeper revelation of what we are being called to celebrate, boast in, and hold firmly.

The Greek word for “assurance” is **hypostasis**. This is an incredibly important term that has garnered centuries of discussion, prayer, and debate.

The word *hypostasis* is defined as, “***The underlying state or underlying substance; or the fundamental reality that supports all else.***” It literally means “standing under.” It is what stands under something, supplying its being. It is considered the “essence” of something.

Hypostasis shows up three times in Hebrews, including the very beginning of the book:

**3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (*hypostasis*)...
(Hebrews 1:3a)**

Christ is the manifestation of the underlying fundamental reality of God. He is the Logos—the One who fully reveals of God’s “essence.”

Depending on the context, this word is typically translated either as: *nature* (substance, essence) or *assurance* (confidence). The translation of “assurance” is because it speaks to something solid and sure on which we find a firm footing.

We see this tension of translation in the third time *hypostasis* shows up in the book:

1 Now faith is the assurance (*hypostasis*) of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Some translations leave it as “assurance,” figuring the writer meant that faith is a firm confidence that what we hope for will come to pass.

However, other translations say that faith is the “substance” of things hoped for. In other words, faith is like the title-deed of an inheritance. It is the underlying foundation of the whole thing, granting access to the inheritance now.

Both translations work. The same can be said about Hebrews 3—which leads to something stunning when we translate this as *essence* instead of *assurance*.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our *hypostasis* firm until the end... (Hebrews 3:14)

When it says, “*hold fast the beginning of our hypostasis...*” this could be translated as holding fast to our original (“beginning”) essence. In other words, we are called hold on to the truth Jesus came to redeem—the reality that we are originally God-breathed beings.

The word for “beginning” is *archē*, which is also used to describe “first in power or authority.” It is used in Scripture for “rulers” and “authorities.”

So, this could also be translated as a call to hold on to your true nature that is first in authority over anything else. *In other words, this is speaking of holding firm to the underlying substance of your being.* When you go underneath the turbulent sea of your thoughts, emotions, memories, temptations, you will find your ruling hypostasis.

Your true and ruling “nature” is the image of God. Through Christ, God has forgiven and cleansed everything that stood in the way of this.

In light of this, the passage is saying *we become partakers of Christ as we hold fast to the truth of our original nature as co-heirs with him.*

Remember, Jesus is *the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (hypostasis)*. Jesus is also called “*the image of the invisible God*” in Colossians 1. Through Christ, we were created to be the same thing. He is the eternal Source, but we are Image-Bearers just like him!

Colossians 1 and Revelation 22 also calls Christ the *archē*. He is “*the Beginning and the End.*”

Putting all this together: *As we learn to celebrate our cleansing and boast in our divine essence, we partake of Christ himself.*

This true nature and essence has authority over anything that speaks a different word over your life. Any “**voice**” from within or without that speaks condemnation or worthlessness is not your true *hypostasis*. The world, and even using the Law of Moses, can plaster other identities on us, but Christ is the assurance of our true nature.

If we do not trust in this—*hold fast to it*—we will not partake of the nature of Christ in our lives. It will remain hidden like the fruit inside of an apple tree in the dead of winter. The potential for apples is there, but it remains frozen. Sadly, there are many who stay spiritually frozen their whole life without bearing the “fruit” of the Holy Spirit.

3 Everything we could ever need for life and godliness has already been deposited in us by his divine power...

(2 Peter 1:3a TPT)

3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

(2 Peter 2:3-4)

This passage declares that everything we need is already inside of us. This is a “*precious and magnificent promise*”—through trusting this promise, we partake of what is inside of us.

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge...

(2 Peter 2:5)

The way we grow in “moral excellence” and other fruits of the Spirit is by applying all diligence to our faith. (A legalistic mind will have a hard time catching this as we have been so trained by the world to read the Bible through a works/self-effort/punishment filter.)

In other words, we grow by becoming more and more confident in God’s love for us and the truth about who we are. We grow by trusting or resting in this more and more!

When temptations and contradictions come; when we see in ourselves or in our minds and emotions something that seems to be evil, we are to be *diligent* in returning to the truth. As we stand firm in faith, holding fast to our joyful confession, we will tap into the “*supply*” of moral excellence and all the other fruits of the Holy Spirit.

As we hear his voice of sonship over us, opening our hearts to it, *we become true partakers of Christ himself, revealed as the family members of God's household.*

A final note from Peter's letter that demonstrates the main thrust of this third chapter of Hebrews... After Peter calls us to trust in what has been deposited into us, then listing the supply of good fruit that will come into their lives, he goes on to say the following:

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

(2 Peter 1:8-9)

This "if" from Peter here connects to the "if" in Hebrews 3: *We are God's household if we hold fast ... We are partakers of Christ if we hold fast...*

Peter is saying: *If these qualities are yours, you are a fruitful believer. But if you lack this fruit and glory in your life, you are blind because you forgot you were purified from sin! You forgot your true identity which has now been restored.*

Thus, the "if" is not a warning about God kicking us out of the house, but about not bearing fruit and experiencing greater reward and joy in eternity.

Follow-up Encounter:

Prepare to take communion. Ask God for a deeper revelation of your true "hypostasis." Quiet your heart and ponder these truths:

You are a carrier of God's glory.

Underneath any turbulence in your mind and emotions is the peaceful presence of God.

*Ask the Holy Spirit to make these truths more real to your heart. **Ask God what it looks like to "apply diligence" in attending to this truth more in your life.***

Receive the bread and the cup... Take some time to write down or share with others what came to your heart during this time of reflection.