

Text: Heb 3.1

The author of Hebrews shifts gears as we turn into chapter 3. In Heb 1-2, he presents Jesus as superior to angels. From 3.1 through 5.10, his main object is to present Jesus as our great high priest, with a few “side-bars” as he works through the topic.

As I began working through the material I found many things to talk about just in the first verse. The verse is only the beginning of the argument of the verses that follow, but there are important truths in almost every word of the verse.

So, what to do? I want to just focus on the main idea of verse 1 and develop it in depth. Next week we will tie it in with some of the verses that follow.

Today, our title is:

Consider Jesus

Of course, Jesus is the subject of Hebrews. We are considering him every week in this series. But our passage is focusing our attention very carefully on two principle offices of His ministry. We will bring in the third main offices as well, taking a closer look at everything Jesus is doing for us.

Let’s read our text so you can see what I am talking about:

Read Heb 3.1-6, text v.1

The two offices named in our text are “Apostle” and “High Priest.”

We first saw the term “High Priest” in 2.17, just last week. Hebrews is the only book of the New Testament that applies the term “priest” to Jesus. Right away we are alerted to something unique about Jesus here in the Heb 3.1

The other term, “Apostle,” is only applied to Jesus in this verse and no other.

It is curious that our author chooses this term to describe Jesus. I think it is connected to the office of “Prophet,” but we will look at that a bit later in the message.

The third office is “King.” All three offices are predicted in the Old Testament, but as John Walvoord says,

“The kingly office of Christ is the first to be mentioned in prophecy and the most prominent in Old Testament prediction.”¹

We will review some key facts about that office, but it isn’t our focus today.

¹ John F Walvoord, “Series in Christology: The Incarnation of the Son of God,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* : Dallas Theological Seminary 105, no. 418 (1948): 146.

One detail before our main points: our author addresses his readers here as believers: “holy brethren.” We will have more to say about this next week, but take this point today:

- This is a message for believers, but if unbelievers will listen, God offers tremendous blessing to you if you will respond in faith.

I. The coming focus: Jesus as King

A. As already noted, the OT focused much on a coming King (a few highlights)

Gn 17.6 “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

Gn 49.10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.

Num 24.17 “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

2 Sa 7.12 “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

Isa 9.6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Lk 1.31-33 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.³² “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

B. A few weeks ago, I had a message on “Jesus is King” (Wed. night service)

1. The NT books that have the most to say about Jesus as King
 - a. Matthew
 - b. Revelation

2. The rest of the NT has only cursory mentions if any
3. Most of the Gospel references (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn) to the King are in the accounts of the trial: the emphasis is on a *coming* kingdom

Jesus to Pilate, Jn 18.36:

Jn 18.36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

C. What does Jesus as King do for us?

1. A kingdom requires
 - a. A king
 - b. A people (subjects)
 - c. A realm (the whole world, acc. Ps 2)
2. Alva McClain spoke of a *mediatorial* kingdom: the King mediates between God and people

"The mediatorial kingdom may be defined tentatively as the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God."²

3. What does the king mediate
 - a. Peace
 - 1) First, peace with God, *i.e.*, Salvation
 - 2) Then, peace with men, *i.e.*, the Millennium
 - b. Justice: the perfect rule of a perfect king, even over imperfect people (again, in the Millennium)

Isa 9.6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On

² Alva J. McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom," *Bibliotheca Sacra: Dallas Theological Seminary* 112, no. 445 (1955).

the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

A major topic, and probably too much for this message, but I thought we needed to add it here to distinguish it from the focus of our text.

Heb 3.1 ¶ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

II. The former function: Jesus our Apostle

A. We are called to pay close attention to Jesus:

1. Word means “to consider attentively, fix one's eyes or mind upon”³
2. An example of its use:

Ac 7.31 “When Moses saw it [the burning bush], he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look *more* closely, there came the voice of the Lord:

So we are to look closely and think intently about Jesus.

B. Especial consider intently Jesus as the Apostle

1. As mentioned, only place in the Bible where this term is used of Jesus
2. The idea of an apostle is “one who is sent on a mission”
3. In the New Testament, the apostles are charged with a message as well, their mission is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ
4. We could consider this a *speaking* ministry

C. Consider the emphasis of John’s gospel

Jn 1.1-2 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.

³ Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (International Bible Translators (IBT), Inc., 1889).

Jn 1.14 ¶ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jn 3.17 “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Jn 3.34 “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

Jn 5.36 “But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish— the very works that I do— testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.

Jn 5.38 “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

Jn 6.29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”

Jn 7.16 So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

Jn 7.18 “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

1. Jesus is the one who was Sent: *i.e.*, the Apostle
2. The Sending had to do with the first coming, in which he mediated a *message* — he came to preach, to prophesy

Heb 3.1 ¶ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

D. Consider this carefully

1. In the future, he will come to mediate peace and justice
2. In the past, he came to mediate the message, the gospel of salvation

“In these last days, he has spoken to us in his Son”

III. The present work: Jesus our High Priest

A. We considered his work of propitiation (atonement) last week (2.17)

Heb 2.17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1. As the high priest, he offers his own self as the perfect sacrifice for sins to God
2. His purpose is to make propitiation for the sins of the people (gaining access, opening the hand and face of God towards sinners)

B. In the book of Hebrews, the priesthood is about more than opening the door to heaven (the propitiation)

1. We will find in the succeeding passages that Jesus is a priest superior to Moses
 - a. We usually don't think of Moses as a priest
 - 1) But Moses stood between the people and God
 - 2) Moses mediated the word to God (a prophetic mediation)
 - 3) Moses interceded between the people and an angry God
 - a) The Golden Calf incident: Ex 32.10, I will make of you [Moses] a great nation

Ex 32.11-14 ¶ Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth '? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people. ¹³ "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'" ¹⁴ So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

- b) In Dt 9, Moses reminds of the same incident, but brings up other rebellions
- i) The judgement of the fiery serpents, just three days out from Sinai
 - ii) The complaint about the lack of water before they reached Sinai
 - iii) The complaint about the lack of meat, “only this manna” – before God sent the quail
 - iv) The failure to believe God and enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea

Then Moses resumes, and reminds them of his intercession with God to prevent God’s outbreak against them

b. We find now that Jesus is an even greater priest

¹ Jn 2.1-2 ¶ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

2. We will find that Jesus is superior

- a. To the priesthood of Aaron
- b. In the superior covenant that he administers
- c. In the superior sacrifice which he offered

Conclusion:

Our text said to consider Jesus closely and carefully. I’ve tried to consider Jesus in all his offices on our behalf.

I don’t know how close I’ve gotten – we only have so much time.

Here is the question, though. *How closely do you study Jesus Christ?*

- Studying him is the object of a lifetime, the object of eternity...
- It is the subject of blessing and life, no matter how long you consider it...

For the one not yet believing, consider him. He is the Apostle speaking grace to you. Believe him!

For the believer, consider him. He is your High Priest, interceding for you.

Worship him!