

# Confidence in Christ – Jesus is our Apostle

Goldstone Church – 30-Oct-16 10:30am

Hebrews 3:1-6

## Introduction

We're continuing our series looking at the first 6 chapters in the book of Hebrews, under the over-arching theme of "Confidence in Christ". This time, we're looking at the beginning of Chapter 3, "Jesus is our Apostle". These 6 verses provide different descriptions of Jesus; the writer urging his readers to "*fix your thoughts on Jesus*".

Because there are so many titles, we're going to use the word "APOSTLE" as an acrostic. Jesus is our Apostle.

**A = [Jesus is] AMBASSADORIAL** (Hebrews 3:1)

*"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess."* (Heb 3:1)

Our English word translated here "apostle" is not very helpful, partly because we don't use the word 'apostle' in our daily lives - so we don't really know what it means. Also, the word 'apostle' is often linked with Jesus' disciples, but these verses are talking about Jesus. By contrast, we know and hear about Ambassadors, and this word gives us a better understanding of what the writer is trying to say.

An Ambassador is sent by their home country, and is authorised to speak out and to be a representative in a foreign country.

We see Jesus doing this in Mark 1:14-15, "*After John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'"*

Jesus is God's messenger, speaking with authority. Jesus is the Son of God, sent and authorised by God the Father, to go into the world, and to be His representative. Jesus is, "Emmanuel, God with us". Jesus is Ambassadorial.

**P = [Jesus is] PRIESTLY** (Hebrews 3:1)

*"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess."* (Heb 3:1)

The writer to the Hebrews uses this title for Jesus on several occasions; linking both Jesus' divine nature, and the worship of God that the priests led in the Temple.

Only once a year, the High Priest was allowed to enter the most holy part of the Temple. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the holiest day in the Jewish year, the High Priest would pass the thick temple curtain, go into the Holy of Holies and perform elaborate rituals to atone – to seek God's forgiveness for the sins that the nation had committed.

However, on the day that Jesus was crucified, Matthew 27:50-51a says, "*When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."*

The word translated “curtain” can also mean screen, divider or separator; a picture of a barrier between sinful man and a holy God. Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross changed everything. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple in Jerusalem was torn in half, from the top to the bottom. Only God could have carried out such an incredible act, because the curtain was physically too high for human hands to have reached it, and physically too thick to have torn it apart.

The torn curtain illustrates Jesus’ body broken for us, opening the way for us to come into God’s holy presence. The age of animal sacrifices was over, the ultimate, once-and-for-all sacrifice has been made. Through Jesus, we are welcomed into the presence of God. Jesus is our Great High Priest.

### **O = [Jesus is] OBEDIENT**

(Hebrews 3:2)

*“He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.”*  
(Heb 3:2)

If you are Faithful, then you are Obedient, i.e. part of being faithful and devoted to God, is that you will honour God in loving obedience.

Jesus verbalised His obedience in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Luke 22:42 Jesus says, “*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*” At Jesus’ darkest moment, His focus is one of loving obedience.

In John 14:15, Jesus extends this obedience to His disciples, saying, “*If you love me, keep my commands.*” In other words, the evidence of our love for Jesus, is seen in how we obey what He says. Jesus is Lovingly Obedient.

### **S = [Jesus is] SELECTED**

(Hebrews 3:2)

*“He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.”*  
(Heb 3:2)

The word “Appointed” can also be read as “Selected”. God the Father selected and chose Jesus; He was ‘set apart’ for His ministry in the world.

During Jesus’ life on earth, God the Father spoke directly over His Son, indicating His pleasure and love:

- a) Just after His baptism, as Jesus was coming up out of the water, Mark 1:11 says, “*And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’*”
- b) On the Mount of Transfiguration, Mark 9:7 says, “*Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’*”

God’s action of appointing Jesus as His ambassador on earth, was framed in the context of a love-relationship; “*You are my Son, whom I love*”. Jesus is Selected.

**T = [Jesus is] THANKWORTHY** (Hebrews 3:3)

*“Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.” (Heb 3:3)*

‘Thankworthy’ means “deserving gratitude”. This is more than just being “worthy” or eligible for being honoured. This is worthiness, but with thanks and appreciation thrown in as a bonus. Jesus is more than eligible and deserving of worship and honour.

Using the picture of a house, the writer says that, although Moses was a great man of God, he was actually only part of the building. By contrast, Jesus is the actual builder of the house – and the household.

During Jesus’ life on earth, His disciples are described as actually worshipping Jesus as a group, on only a few occasions. One of those times is after the disciples had seen Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus climbs into the boat, Matthew 14:33 says, *“Then those who were in the boat [the disciples] worshipped him [Jesus], saying, Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Jesus is not limited by our rules and laws of nature, because Jesus set the rules up in the first place! He is the Master-Builder. Jesus is Thankworthy.

**L = [Jesus is] LAWMAKER** (Hebrews 3:5)

*“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future.” (Heb 3:5)*

If we look at this verse with the eyes of first-century Christians, we would link the reference to Moses, as referring to the Books of Moses in the Old Testament. In other words, there is an undercurrent meaning in this verse to when God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

It’s important to remember what Jesus said himself about the Law of Moses. In Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus says, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

Jesus is the Law, in 2 ways:

1. He was there when the Law was given to Moses in the first place.
2. Jesus fulfilled every aspect that the Law required when He lived as a man.

Jesus is Lawmaker.

**E = [Jesus is] ETERNAL** (Hebrews 3:6)

*“But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.” (Heb 3:6)*

Although this verse doesn’t use the word “eternal”, Jesus must be eternal to meet the requirements of being described as, “a son over God’s house”. For God to be God, He must be eternal. So it follows: for Jesus to be called God’s Son, Jesus must also be eternal. The two go together.

Jesus indicated the eternal aspects of His nature when He tells His disciples, in John 14:1-2, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?*”

Jesus would only be able to fulfil this promise if He was every bit as eternal as God is – in God’s house. Jesus is Eternal.

## CONCLUSION

We need to grasp these essential and foundational descriptions of Jesus, so that we can base and build our daily lives upon them. The reason why these titles and descriptions of Jesus are so important:

*“Therefore, holy brothers [and sisters], who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” (Hebrews 3:1)*

- When life says: there is no God, or He seems far away... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus is Ambassadorial. Jesus is God with us.
- When life says: you are too sinful, you have done too many bad things to approach such a holy God... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus is our Great High Priest, who made the way into God’s holy presence.
- When life says: do your own thing, no-one will notice... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus showed His loving obedience by going to the cross, and paying the penalty for you and for me.
- When life says: Jesus was just a ‘good man’ or a great idea... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. God the Father chose Jesus specially - to save you and me.
- When life says: what’s the point of church and all this religious stuff... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus is worthy and deserving of all our worship and adoration. He’s the one who built the world in which we live. Jesus is Thankworthy.
- When life says: Christianity is just a bunch of rules and regulations... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus fulfilled every aspect of the Law, so that we can have eternal life.
- When life says: enjoy life to the max because there’s nothing afterwards... “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Jesus is in heaven, preparing a place for each one of us.

May we all “*fix your thoughts of Jesus*”. Let Jesus be our priority in all that we do and say.

**AMEN**