

“CONSIDER JESUS”

**I. Introduction**

- A. Several years ago, Michael Horton wrote a book entitled, *Christless Christianity*.
1. Of course, the book was not advocating a Christless version of Christianity.
  2. Instead, it was pointing out some of the ways in which the church in America is promoting a Christless Christianity, whether wittingly or unwittingly.
  3. Horton begins the book by pointing out that “It is easy to get distracted from Christ as the only hope for sinners. Where everything is measured by our happiness rather than by God’s holiness, the sense of our being sinners becomes secondary, if not offensive... [Satan] is more subtle than we imagine. He lulls us to sleep as we trim our message to the banality of popular culture and invoke Christ’s name for anything and everything but salvation from the coming judgment... I think that the church in America today is so obsessed with being practical, relevant, helpful, successful, and perhaps even well-liked that it nearly mirrors the world itself.” [15-16]
  4. In short, Horton is saying that the reason why many American churches are becoming more and more Christless is because they are being distracted from the things that are at the heart of the gospel.
  5. The key to faithful Christian living is keeping your eyes fixed upon Jesus.
  6. If you fail to do that, you will move in the direction of Christless Christianity.

- B. The Hebrew Christians to whom this letter was originally written were letting their circumstances distract them from Christ.
1. They were beginning to face opposition for their faith in Christ, and they were responding to this by considering whether it might be better to return to their Jewish roots.
  2. In the verses that we have just read, the writer addresses this by urging these Christians to turn their eyes back to Jesus and give careful consideration to who he is.
  3. He reminds them that Jesus is the one that we confess.
  4. He shows them that Jesus is greater than Moses.
  5. And he explains that it is only in Jesus that we are the household of God.

## II. Jesus Is the One We Confess (vv. 1-2)

- A. As the passage begins, the writer addresses these Christians by using two phrases that reminds them of the new identity that they were given when they confessed Christ.
1. This in itself is very significant.
  2. It tells us that an essential part of being a Christian is believing what the Bible tells you about who you are in Christ.
  3. The first thing that the writer says about these Christians' identity is that they are "holy brothers."
  4. To be a Christian is to be holy in Christ, to be set apart to belong to God.
  5. This is what the writer meant in the previous chapter when he said that Christ sanctifies us.

6. At the moment of our regeneration, we obtain a holy standing before God, and from that point on the Holy Spirit begins the work of conforming us to the pattern of Christ's holiness.
- B. When the writer refers to Christians as "brothers," he is not disregarding the female members of Christ's church.
1. He uses the masculine gender because it conveys the idea of inheritance.
  2. Whether you are male or female, if you trust in Christ you share in the inheritance of the firstborn in the kingdom of God.
  3. This points us back to what the writer said in chapter 2 about how Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers.
  4. By virtue of his incarnation, Jesus is our elder brother in God's family.
  5. Biblical Christianity is not just about a personal relationship with God.
  6. You have brothers and sisters in Christ.
  7. You are a member of God's household.
  8. You are called to live in community with your brethren as those who have been set apart to belong to God.
- C. The second thing that the writer says about Christian identity is that we share in a heavenly calling.
1. Everyone has an earthly calling or 'vocation.'
  2. The word 'vocation' comes from the Latin verb *voco*, which means 'I call.'
  3. Our earthly vocations are important.

4. God works through them to care for his world.
  5. But while they are important, they are only temporary.
  6. They only last for as long as we are in this world.
- D. As Christians, we not only have an earthly calling; we also have a heavenly calling.
1. This calling is “heavenly” in two senses: it comes from heaven and is to heaven.
  2. Our true home is not in this world.
  3. As Paul says in his letter to the Philippians, “our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.” (Phil. 3:20-21)
  4. It is easy for us to lose sight of our heavenly citizenship amid all the cares of this life.
  5. This is why it is important for you to remember who you are in Christ.
  6. Remember the glorious future that lies ahead of you.
  7. You belong to a pilgrim people, a people on the way to a better country, a heavenly one.
  8. Don’t get too comfortable in this world.
  9. As the writer says later on in this letter, God’s people live as strangers and exiles in the world.
  10. We often get all worked up about the fact that the world has so little tolerance for our beliefs.

11. While it is understandable that we would not be happy about this, we should remember is that this is a sign of our identity as Christians.
- E. After addressing these Christians in a manner that emphasizes their unique identity in Christ, the writer then instructs them to “consider Jesus.”
1. This does not mean ‘give Jesus a try.’
  2. The word ‘consider’ has to do with focused concentration.
  3. These Christians were letting their minds be dominated by the problems that they were experiencing.
  4. They were losing their focus.
  5. What they really needed to do was to think carefully about Jesus.
- F. Isn’t this an interesting word of counsel?
1. It certainly doesn’t seem like very practical advice.
  2. It is not the sort of thing that we want to hear when we are dealing with our troubles.
  3. But it is the one thing that is more important than anything else.
  4. We always need to be thinking about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.
  5. It is a habit that we need to cultivate.
  6. It is the only way we will every be able to keep things in proper perspective.

7. Don't let your thoughts be dominated by life's worries and troubles.
  8. By all means, bring your concerns about those things to God in prayer.
  9. But make sure that you take time to reflect upon all that Jesus Christ is for you.
  10. This is the way to guard yourself against reacting to life's various challenges in the wrong way.
- G. The writer describes Jesus as "the apostle and high priest of our confession."
1. This is the only place in New Testament where the title 'apostle' is used in reference to Jesus.
  2. That being said, the related verb "send" is often used of Jesus, and this helps us to understand what the writer means.
  3. An apostle is someone who is officially sent to represent someone else.
  4. Jesus was sent to us by God the Father.
  5. He is God's envoy, God's representative, to us.
  6. If you want to know God and his will, then you need to consider Jesus.
  7. God has spoken his final word to us in Jesus.
- H. Not only is Jesus the apostle of our confession, he is also the high priest of our confession.
1. As our apostle he represents God to us; as our high priest he represents us before God.

2. In the words of F.F. Bruce, Jesus “is not only... the one in whom God has revealed himself finally and completely, but also the perfect embodiment of humanity’s obedient response to God.” [91]
3. Jesus has entered into God’s presence on our behalf.
4. He offers his atoning death and his perfect obedience to make intercession for us.
5. Because of his high-priestly ministry, we can draw near to the throne of grace with confidence, looking for mercy and grace to help in time of need.

### **III. Jesus Is Worthy of More Glory than Moses (vv. 3-6a)**

- A. In the next part of the passage, the writer helps us to consider Jesus by explaining that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses.
  1. The reason why he compares Jesus to Moses is because Moses was an extremely important figure in Judaism.
  2. Moses was the symbol of the law of God, which God delivered through Moses’ mediation.
  3. Like Jesus, Moses was God’s envoy to his people and he was their representative before God.
  4. But the writer reminds us that Moses pales in comparison to Jesus.
  5. Moses was a human mediator, but Jesus is fully God and fully man.
  6. Moses was a great leader in the church, but he was still just a member of the church.
  7. Moses was a servant in God’s house, but Jesus is the builder of the house.

8. The term "house" is not being used in a literal sense here but in a figurative sense.
  9. The "house" that Jesus is building is the church, the people of God.
  10. Jesus made the house.
  11. He is the one whom God promised to David in 2 Samuel 7, the offspring who would build a house for God's name.
- B. Notice also that Moses and Jesus were faithful in the same house.
1. This is an important point.
  2. It tells us that there is one people of God across the Old and New Testaments.
  3. This is why we object to dispensationalism's insistence on keeping the church and Israel separate.
  4. The Bible makes it clear that Old Testament Israel was the church and that the New Testament church is the true Israel.
  5. Moses served in the very same house that Jesus is building.
  6. The Lord ruled over his house in a different manner under the old covenant than he does under the new covenant, but it is still the same house and it still has the same builder.
- C. While Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, Jesus is faithful over God's house as a son.
1. He is the firstborn son, the heir of God's household.
  2. As we saw back in chapter 1, Jesus' faithfulness has resulted in his being appointed the heir of all things.
  3. And the thing that is so amazing about this is that Jesus does not keep the inheritance that he has won all for himself.



4. Instead, he shares it with the many brothers who were given to him in the covenant of redemption, the “children” who were mentioned back in chapter 2.
5. Jesus builds God’s house by sharing his inheritance with his brothers.

#### **IV. In Jesus, We Are God’s House (v. 6b)**

- A. The last point that the writer makes as he points us to Jesus is to say that in Jesus, we are God’s house.
  1. We are the true temple of God.
  2. Think about how significant it would have been for these Hebrew Christians to hear this.
  3. They were cast out of the local Jewish synagogue when they professed faith in Christ.
  4. They were excommunicated, cut off from what was at one time the visible church.
  5. But here they are assured that they have not been cast out of the true temple of God.
  6. The temple in Jerusalem had a degree of outward glory, but that glory did not last.
  7. All of its splendor was lost when the Romans laid it waste in A.D. 70.
  8. As Christians, we are God’s house, God’s true temple.
  9. God will cause his presence to dwell in our midst for all eternity.
  10. Nothing in this world can compare to the stability of God’s house.

11. Every human institution will one day crumble into ruins, but God's house will endure forever.
- B. Our situation today is obviously different than the situation of those first century Christians.
1. We have not been cast out of any synagogues.
  2. We are not under the threat of serious persecution.
  3. Nevertheless, we are living in a culture that is becoming increasingly intolerant of those who adhere to biblical Christianity.
  4. We see an example of this in the way Gordon College is having its accreditation scrutinized due to its stated refusal to accept homosexual behavior as normative.
  5. When Christians live in this kind of social context, there is significant pressure to cave in.
  6. Many who call themselves Christians have already begun to cave in.
  7. They may still think of themselves as Christians, but they have exchanged the things that Christ says in his Word for the things that the culture says.
  8. We need to consider Jesus, or else we will end up doing the exact same thing.
- C. This brings us to the last sentence of our passage, where the writer says that "we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope."
1. This does not mean that our holding fast is what makes us God's house.
  2. That would make man the builder of the house.

3. If that were the case, the house would be built on a foundation that is sure to fail.
4. What the writer is saying is that true faith is faith that perseveres in the truth.
5. Those who cave in to cultural pressure and conform to worldly ways of thinking are no longer standing on the apostle and high priest whom Christians confess.
6. The only faith that will endure is the faith that continues to rely upon Christ as he comes to us in the biblical gospel.

## V. Conclusion

- A. Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which our faith rests.
- B. As long as our faith remains founded upon the Jesus who is revealed in the Bible, we can know for certain that we will never fall.
- C. Like the Hebrew Christians to whom this letter was originally addressed, it is important for us to keep on considering Jesus.
- D. It is important because there are many people in the world today, many people right here in the Lakes Region, who confess a different Jesus, a Jesus who fits in with what they want to believe and with how they want to live.
- E. That Jesus may be popular, but there is one very serious drawback to believing in him: he is not real.
- F. Make sure that you hold fast to the Jesus of Scripture.
- G. Hold fast to him by meditating upon who he is and what he has accomplished on behalf of his people.
- H. For as J. Gresham Machen once wrote, "The Jesus of the New Testament has at least one advantage over the Jesus of modern

reconstruction -- He is real. He is not a manufactured figure suitable as a point of support for ethical maxims, but a genuine Person whom a man can love. Men have loved Him through all the Christian centuries. And the strange thing is that despite all the efforts to remove Him from the pages of history, there are those who love Him still." [*Christianity and Liberalism*, 116]