

Jesus: Apostle And High Priest

"Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus who was faithful to him that appointed him, even as was Moses in all his house" (Heb. 3:1f). The word *"wherefore"* ties this section to that which immediately precedes it: a section which declares Jesus to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God; one who is able to succor man who is tempted because He himself had been tempted. In view of Christ's serving faithfully as a mediator between man and God the Hebrew writer urges: *"Consider Him."*

These who are urged to *"consider"* Jesus are themselves addressed as *"holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling."* It has been suggested these are so addressed because he who wrote this letter was first a Jew, *"fleshly brother"* of those to whom he wrote; that they were *"holy brethren"* because they had believed on the Lord Jesus just as had the writer of the epistle. That is possible; certainly it was true (if we regard Paul as the author of the epistle). Still, Peter wrote to some who were Gentiles and brethren and said, *"But, like he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living because it is written, ye shall be holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's works ..."* (1 Pet. 1:15-17). Peter calls Gentile believers, brethren (they have the same Father as he, although not fleshly brethren) and urges them to be holy. These were brethren in Christ; they were partakers (sharers in and of) of a calling which was from heaven or God, *"holy brethren."* We are urged to consider Christ as an Apostle and High Priest. Although Christ is identified many times in this letter as a *"high priest,"* reference to him as an *"apostle"* appears but this one time, in this letter. Nor is Jesus spoken of or referred to be an Apostle elsewhere. The word *"apostle"* is most often applied to the twelve whom Jesus chose from among the multitude of the disciples (Mark 3:13-19). It has been properly observed that *"all the apostles were disciples, but not all the disciples were apostles."* The twelve were endowed with miraculous powers and to them was give the promise of Holy Spirit baptism which promise God fulfilled at Pentecost (Lk. 24:48f; Acts 1:4f; 2:1-4). Yet others aside from the twelve were identified as apostles. Paul was called an apostle (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1 et al). Barnabas was called an apostle (Acts 14:4).

Then, here in Hebrews three our Lord is called *"an Apostle."* These are all proper usages of the word for *"apostle"* literally means "one sent." The twelve were *"sent"* by Jesus (Mt. 10:5; Mk. 16:15). Paul was sent to Gentiles by Jesus, equal to the original twelve (Acts 26:17). Barnabas was an apostle because he, along with Saul, had been sent unto a work by the Holy Spirit,

sent out from the church in Antioch (Acts 13:2f). Jesus was God's apostle. God had sanctified and sent His Son into the world (Jn. 10:36). Jesus said, "*God sent not his son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him*" (Jn. 3:17). We should consider Jesus as the High Priest of our "*confession*" (profession). The writer's Jewish readers were familiar with a "*high priest*" for his role in their religion was very significant. Their religion evolved around the functions of such an one, a role above all others. He alone could enter the Holy of Holies on the day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. But Jesus is the High Priest of our confession: but, as the writer shall show eminently above those who served as high priest in the tabernacle or temple. NEXT: "Moses A Servant; Christ A Son."

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