Bible Class **Notes** Sunday, 04 October 2026

Jesus Is Better

Hebrews 1:1–2:18 · English Standard Version

The letter to the Hebrews addresses Jewish Christians under persecution who were considering a return to Judaism. Their situation raises a question that remains relevant: what holds a person when following Jesus becomes costly. The core argument of the letter is that a relationship with Jesus, though it means suffering, is far better than anything the Mosaic law offers. Deliberately turning from Jesus means an eternal loss of salvation. That claim is not a threat about minor stumbles. It is a warning about a deliberate choice to walk away.

The application for the present reader is not a temptation to leave Jesus for the law of Moses. That is extremely unlikely. The difficulty of following Jesus in the current environment is the problem. In showing that Jesus is greater than the law of Moses, the letter shows that Jesus is greater than anything else a person might choose when the way becomes hard. The same remedy that cures their problem cures ours. Whatever the challenge, whether family pressure, persistent sin, or simple weariness, Hebrews is the answer.

Jesus Is God's Ultimate Revelator

Hebrews opens by setting Jesus against every previous way God has spoken. The contrast is deliberate and complete.

> **Hebrews 1:1–3**
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> *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."*

God spoke in verse 1 and God spoke in verse 2. The first contrast is temporal: long ago versus in these last days. The last days began with Jesus and the apostles and continue until the end of time. They are the final way God deals with mankind. God will never return to a previous arrangement. The second contrast is the audience: to our fathers versus to us. The third is the messenger: through the prophets in many ways versus through his Son. The description of the Son is exalted. He is the heir of all things, the one through whom the world was created, the radiance of God's glory, the

exact imprint of his nature, the one who upholds the universe by the word of his power, the one who made purification for sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The point is that Jesus is better than what the readers already had. A message that came long ago is less than a message that came recently. A message that came to someone else is less than a message that comes to you. A message that came through a servant is less than a message that comes through a Son.

Jesus Is Better Than Angels

Having become as much better than the angels as he has inherited a more excellent name than they, the writer elaborates the claim. Angels are called sons of God, but Jesus is the Son in a way no one else is.

Hebrews 1:8

“But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.’”

Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” Wind is invisible and changeable. Flame flickers and goes out. Angels are unstable and impermanent. Of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” The contrast is between a throne and ministers, between forever and ever and the temporary nature of wind and fire. The Son is called God. He is called Lord in a quotation from the Old Testament that originally referred to God. When he again brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all the angels worship him.” Only God rightly receives worship. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. The angels are ministering spirits sent out to serve those who will inherit salvation. The one who sits and sends is greater than those who are sent.

Better Than Angels Means Better Than the Law

The argument is not that the readers were confused about angels. The readers were tempted by the law of Moses. The law was delivered by angels. Therefore, if Jesus is greater than the angels, the revelation that comes through Jesus is greater than the revelation that came through angels.

Hebrews 2:1–2

> *"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,"*

The message declared by angels is the law of Moses. If that message carried penalties for every transgression, the greater message carries greater consequences for rejection. All the law could do was kill the body. Jesus said not to fear those who kill the body but to fear the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. The transfiguration makes the same point. Moses and Elijah appeared, the law and the prophets, and the voice said of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." When the disciples looked again, Moses and Elijah were gone.

Jesus Became Human to Save and to Help

A question arises. If Jesus is greater than the angels, how can he be human? Psalm 8 says man is made lower than the angels. The writer anticipates the difficulty. Humans are lower than angels. If Jesus is human, how can he be greater?

> **Hebrews 2:9**
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> *"But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."*

The solution is that Jesus temporarily lowered himself to live as a human on the earth in order to accomplish God's purpose. He is still human. He will always be human. He will always have a physical body. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. The real sacrifice is not only that he died or that he became human for thirty-three years. The real sacrifice is that he became human forever.

Psalm 8 looks back to the creation command that man should rule over the works of God's hands. The writer notes that we do not yet see all things subjected to man. Hurricanes still come. Animals are not under our complete control. The dominion is not fully realized in ordinary humans. But we do see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death. To achieve dominion, Jesus had to become a human. He is crowned because he suffered and died.

Jesus became human for two reasons. He became human so that he could suffer and die for our sins. God is immortal; He cannot die. Jesus had to become a man in order to die. He also became human

so that he could learn sympathy through hardship. The only person who can truly understand what another is going through is someone who has gone through the same thing. When we go to Jesus for help, he can help because he understands. Throughout the letter the point will be made that Jesus suffered and won. If you suffer, you will win.

Concluding Thoughts

Jesus is God. It could not be more plain in chapter 1. Jesus is God's ultimate and final revelation. He will never give another. Jesus is literally and physically human. These truths carry weight for every reader who finds following Jesus difficult. The same one who is greater than angels, greater than the law, and greater than every other option is the one who became like us in order to save us and to help us. The letter calls for closer attention to what we have heard, not because the way is easy, but because the one who calls is better.