

Jen Wilkin

Better

A Study of Hebrews • Lesson 2

Hebrews 1-2 - “Better Than Angels”

The author of the book of Hebrews begins by answering the all-important question, “*Who is Jesus Christ?*” for the first century Jewish Christians. We today need to answer this questions as well. Some may say He is a prophet, a moral example, a madman, or even that He is of no consequence-but whatever the answer, it is pivotal to everyone and determines how we live our lives.

Verses 1-4 answer the question

In the Old Testament, God spoke through dreams, through a burning bush, through thunder at Mt. Sinai, through a donkey, through prophets. But in these last days God has spoken to us through His Son. We are still living in the “last days” which are the days since the resurrection as we await Jesus’ return. He is the true and better prophet, all things created through Him (the Alpha) and the heir of all things (the Omega).

“You have heard that it was said, but I say to you”—the equivalent of “thus saith the Lord”—He is establishing His full authority as God.

Vs. 3- the Radiance and the glory of God—He is not simply reflecting God’s glory, He is the full expression of God’s glory and the exact stamp or impression of who God is—like a signet ring would stamp its imprint-Jesus is the exact representation of the character of God as you can know Him with the limitations of being in time and space. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus.

He upholds the universe by the Word of His power—He is the creator and also the sustainer of all things. He gives life but no one gives it to Him. He is self-sufficient and he supplies it for everyone else. Everything/everyone except God is a created and sustained being.

He made purification for sins—He is priest and He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High—reference to His power as King

So He is *prophet, priest and King*

He is Lord-Yaweh - I Am—the Name more excellent than angels.

Angel Worship was a thing then and it is still kind of a thing today. People like the idea of having a guardian angel watching over them. But then and now, it is fixing our eyes on something that is Less Than. Who are the Angels?? They are divine Messengers, created beings who bring the Word of God to people. The law was delivered to Moses by angels. In Jacob’s dream, (Genesis 28:10-22) he saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder meaning that God was communing back and forth with him. We don’t worship angels, the messengers, we worship God alone.

7 Old Testament passages referenced in Hebrews (7 the number of completeness) to show this:

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?

Psalm 2:7

2 Samuel 7:14

Angels are not sons—they are less

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

Psalm 97:7

We don’t worship the angels—the Angels themselves are worshippers of God! Jesus is worthy of the worship of both angels and men!

Hebrews 1:7-9 “Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” 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. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

Psalm 104:4

Psalm 4:6-7

Angels are ministers/servants. They serve the Son. Jesus is elevated over them.

Hebrews 1:10-12 And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

Psalm 102

Angels are created beings with a beginning point. Jesus is eternal—He has always existed—not created—He laid the foundations of the earth

Hebrews 1:13-14 “And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

Psalm 110:1

Christ is seated at the right hand of power—Not an angel. His enemies will be His footstool—they will be subjugated and conquered.

Hebrews 1:14 - the angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation—they are servants of Christ but also they serve believers!! We don’t worship them.

Chapter 2

“Therefore” (pointing back to what was just said) - Begins with the first of 5 warnings in the book of Hebrews

Hebrews 2:1-4 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Note the nautical references through the book-essentially, “we must moor our boats to what we just heard lest we drift away...”

Therefore - you have all you need but you must pay much closer attention to it. Don't lose your focus! The early Jewish Christians were dealing with the pressures of rejections from both their families/the Jewish community as well as the surrounding Roman community. Think of the similarities to our current culture as we live in a post Christian world. Do you understand the supremacy of Christ? You must or you will be likely to wander back into what is familiar and comfortable. For us that might be cultural Christianity, with its legalism and bondage. Pay attention to doctrine - the supremacy of Christ primarily!

God gave the law at Mt. Sinai. It was reliable. Obedience = blessing and disobedience resulted in curses. He was faithful to that and will be faithful to the warnings too.

Transgressions = deliberately walking over the boundary - willful sins of commission - example: Exodus 32 and the making of the golden calf. They knew they were doing wrong and they did it anyway. God's holiness must be upheld.

Disobedience = sins of omission - 2 Samuel 6:5-7 - Uzzah touched the ark during transport/didn't follow God's explicit instructions. He was not careful to honor God's holiness but He was not willfully defying God.

Those who heard were the Apostles. We have received a much better thing—the New Covenant. What will happen to us if we don't take hold of this?

Consider the Parable of the Sower: Mt. 13:1-23, Luke 8:4-15, Mark 4:1-20

Good soil produces fruit but the other types of soil are environments where the Word does not reach the heart. In other words, do I understand this intellectually but am I so comfortable in my knowledge that I am not responding in my heart? Is my life any different because of the message I am hearing? That is the warning for us.

2:5-8a Jesus was made a little lower than the angels—Quoting from Psalm 8. In His humanity Jesus was limited. He was not using His supernatural powers as a human man. Thus He was “made a little lower than the angels” for a time. During the incarnation, He was subject to death, without the same supernatural powers and access the Throne as when He was in Heaven.

2:8-9 nothing is outside of His control but it doesn't look like that right now. We don't see it at the present. We feel all the uncertainty. So, don't drift! The author is pointing towards the unseen.

2:10-11 The reference to sons covers men and women—“siblings” Brothers and sisters.

Jesus was the trailblazer - He went first

Hebrews 2:12-13 Jesus was made perfect through suffering. He was already perfect. He did not lack in any way, but through suffering he was shown to be perfect as He completed what the Father gave Him to do.

2:14-16 fear of death is a driver in many things we do. When we make certain decisions about money, vacations, plans, time, our aging—conscious of our lives being short- sometimes we can be in bondage to the fear of death. (not all of these types of decisions are bad) Death is an enemy that is put under the feet of Christ He helps the offspring of Abraham (that is All believers)

2:17- propitiation = satisfaction

2:18 He is able - He is a sympathetic High Priest. The angels are not part of the family of God the way that the children of Abraham (we) are.

Jesus identifies with us, He helps us, He has gone before us like an older brother paving the way and watching out for us, cherishing us, sympathizing with us - how much more? He is BETTER.

In Christ Alone - Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZuIyrwSqHY>