

HEBREWS: *Jesus is Better*

Hebrews 1:1–4 | *The Supremacy of Christ*

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Does anybody here know what the shortest verse in the Bible is? || *John 11:35*, “Jesus wept.”

As many of you know, over the past several months, I have worked the early morning shift at UPS, and I spend a lot of time talking to guys there about the Bible. This past week, one of the guys on my line said that *John 11:35* is his favorite verse in the Bible. It was obvious that he was just joking about how short that verse is, but I was thinking to myself (*I didn't say it out loud*), “Do you have any idea how **powerful** this verse is!?”

- This verse shows us the heart of our Savior. It reveals the depths of His love and His compassion. We see the emotion realness of our God. Not only does Jesus know what it's like experience unrivaled joy, but He also knows what it's like to experience deep sorrow. You know **the saltiness of tears**? Jesus knows what that tastes like. “*Jesus wept*” means Your God knows what it's like to walk in your shoes. So, if that's truly one of your favorite Bible verses, it's a really good one.

Later that same morning, this guy told me to go look up *Leviticus 5:14* in my Bible. He said that was another one of his favorite Bible verses. So, I did.

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying...”

~ *Leviticus 5:14*

It's funny. It's funny to say that *that's* your favorite verse in the Bible. 😊 So, I laughed. But then (*this time*) I decided not to keep my thoughts to myself. I told him exactly what I thought of this verse:

- Don't you see how amazing this verse is!? **Think of it...**
- The Creator of the UNIVERSE was speaking to a sinful human being!
 - The God who created galaxies and solar systems...
 - The God who wrote the unique DNA coding for every human being...
 - The God who is exalted high above all things...
 - The God who is perfect in all His ways...
 - The God who spoke life into existence...
 - ...was speaking to a sinful human being.
- And as this *HOLY* God is speaking to this *SINFUL* man, His words aren't full of wrath or disapproval or condescension or condemnation or disappointment (like you might expect); they are full of *HOPE*.
 - Do you know **WHAT** God is saying to Moses in this passage? He is telling Moses about the sacrifice required for people to have a relationship with Him.
 - The God who spoke the universe into existence is speaking to a sinful human being about how we can have a relationship with Him.

So, if *Leviticus 5:14* is truly one of your favorite Bible verses, it's a really good one! The God who created the universe SPEAKS to His people. That's awesome!

HEBREWS

Today, we are beginning a journey through the book of Hebrews together, and it starts the same way the Bible does: *with God speaking*.¹

**God...at various times and in various ways
spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.**

~ *Hebrews 1:1*

God spoke!

God has *always* been speaking.

This world *exists* because God spoke (**Genesis 1**).

But something happened in the Garden of Eden that changed the way God's people heard Him speak... They *rebelled*. They *sinned*. They *disobeyed*. They *turned their backs* on God's word. And in that moment, they became something that is fundamentally opposed to God: they became sinners. And the horror of sin is that it *separates* people from God. In that moment, their fellowship with God was broken because God is perfect, and they were now rebels.

Instead of joining God when He came to walk with them, the Bible says that they "*hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God*" (**Gen 3:8**).² God came to speak with them, and they couldn't look Him in the face.

That is the ultimate tragedy of sin. They could no longer look into the face of their Maker.³

One of the most beautiful things about **conversations** is looking at somebody's face when you're talking with them. Sure, there are **alternatives** (e.g., *phone calls, texting, email, letters...*), but none of them compares to being face to face with someone while they are speaking to you.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam & Eve turned their face away from God. They *separated* themselves from the presence of the Lord. So, as they were talking with God, they couldn't see His face, and that became the story of the rest of the Old Testament.

Sin destroyed the relationship that we were created for, and their story became the story of every human being. The Bible tells us that we are all sinners – by choice and by nature (**Rom 3:9, 23**), and the **consequence** of our sin is that we are separated from the face of God.⁴

But, although we lost the ability to speak with God face to face (**Exod 33:20**), that didn't stop God from speaking.

The God who created you has never stopped speaking.⁵

¹ See Gen 1:1–3.

² And then God asked His people a question for the very first time: "*Where are you?*" (**3:9**).

³ This is to say, they could no longer gaze upon the unveiled glory of the Lord (see **Exod 33:18–23**). Moses asks to see God's glory (**33:18**), and God responds, "*You cannot see My face*" (**33:20**). So, when the Bible says that we are all under sin (**Rom 3:9**) and that we have all fallen short of the glory of God (**Rom 3:23**), another way to say this is that none of us can behold the face of God – which is why we walk by faith and not by sight (**2 Cor 5:7**).

⁴ For an excellent summary on the question of speaking "**face to face**" with God, see [this article](#) by Got Questions.

⁵ Psalm 19:1–4.

Throughout the OT, we see God **speaking** to His people through His prophets; and He spoke to His prophets using all kinds of various means: visions,⁶ dreams,⁷ blazing fire,⁸ thunder and lighting,⁹ clouds,¹⁰ donkeys,¹¹ angels,¹² ...

As amazing as this must have been, all of it was mediated, meaning: God's used other means of speaking to His people... not face-to-face. That's how Hebrews starts out:

**God...at various times and in various ways
spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.**

~ *Hebrews 1:1*

But then, "*in these last days*" of this story, the most miraculous thing in the history of the universe happened: *God became a human & spoke to us face-to-face.*

**[God became a human] and dwelt among us,
and we beheld His glory...**

~ *John 1:14*

What does this mean?

It means that when Jesus came, we saw the face of God.¹³

- The Voice that was in the beginning creating the worlds (**Heb 1:2, 10**) ...
- The God whose throne is forever (**Heb 1:8**) ...
- The One who is the brightness of the Father's glory (**Heb 1:3**) ...
- The Savior who single-handedly dealt with our sin once and for all (**Heb 1:3**) ...
- God incarnate (**John 1:14**) ...

... **SPOKE TO US.**

And as He spoke, we were staring at the face of God.

.....

And then we crucified Him because we didn't like what He had to say.

Q. Why? What was Jesus saying that made the religious leaders so furious that they wanted to silence Him forever?

⁶ E.g., Abraham (Gen 15:1); Jacob (Gen 46:2); Isaiah (Isa 6:1-8); Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-14); Amos (Amos 1:1); Zechariah (Zech 1:8).

⁷ E.g., Abimelech (Gen 20), Pharaoh (Gen 41:1-7), Midianite soldier (Judges 7:13-15); Solomon (1 Kings 3:5), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:1-45).

⁸ E.g., Exod 3:2-4; Deut 4:11.

⁹ E.g., Exod 19:16; 20:18; Job 26:14; 37:4-5; 40:9; Psalm 18:13; 29:3.

¹⁰ E.g., Exod 16:10; Lev 16:2; Deut. 4:11; Num 16:42; 1 Kings 8:10-12.

¹¹ E.g., Num 22:28.

¹² E.g., Gen 19:1; Judges 13:13.

¹³ **John 14:9**, "...He who has seen Me has seen the Father..." For a beautiful song on this theme, see Phil Wickham's "[Face of God](#)" and this live recording [with Shane & Shane](#).

- He claimed to have the power to forgive sin.¹⁴
- He claimed to be the only way to God the Father.¹⁵
- He claimed to be one with the Father.¹⁶
- He claimed that to see Him was to see the face of God.¹⁷
- He claimed to be the Light of the world.¹⁸
- He claimed that His words were life.¹⁹
- He claimed that He had the power to give eternal life.²⁰
- He claimed that He was the Rescuer who was promised in the beginning.²¹
- He claimed that their entire Bible was pointing to Him.²²
- He claimed to be **God**.²³

And after living a perfect life, this Jesus (God incarnate) did the most unexpected thing: He laid freely, willingly, and joyfully gave up His life on the cross as the punishment for my sin. And for your sin. He suffered the wrath of God (all of it) for the sin of the human race.

And do you remember the question that Jesus cried out to God as He hung there on the cross?

My God. My God.
 [Where are you?]
 Why have you forsaken Me?
 ~ *Matthew 27:46*

The cost of sin was always separation from God, and that's the cost that Jesus paid with His life on the cross. He took our sin upon Himself,²⁴ and as His body hung nailed to a cross, He paid for my sin by being separated from the Father. And His sacrifice was enough! Our debt for sin was paid in full²⁵ – so that the very first thing that happened the moment Jesus died was the wall that separated us from the presence of the Father was ripped in two.²⁶

The first question after sin separated us from God was a relationship question: *where are you?*

The last question before the power of sin was destroyed forever was the same question.

And the One who made the way for sinful people to have a restored relationship with a Holy God was the One who was both fully God & fully man: *Jesus*.

What does this mean? It means that He is better than anything else in *their* life. And *mine*. And *yours*. That's the message of the Bible as a whole, and that's the message of the book of Hebrews in particular: ***Jesus is better***.

¹⁴ Mark 2:10.

¹⁵ John 14:6.

¹⁶ John 10:30.

¹⁷ John 14:9.

¹⁸ John 8:12.

¹⁹ John 6:63.

²⁰ John 3:14–16; 10:28.

²¹ John 4:26.

²² John 5:39.

²³ John 8:58.

²⁴ 2 Cor 5:21.

²⁵ John 19:31, "It is finished."

²⁶ Matt 27:51.

- He is better than your religion.
- He is better than your relationships.
- He is better than your success.
- He is better than your reputation.
- He is better than your hobbies.
- He is better than your wildest financial dreams.

There is none like Jesus. He's better.

- He's better than angels.
- He's better than Moses.
- He's better than the law.
- He's better than the priests.
- He's better than the temple.
- He's better than the sacrifices.
- He's better than the promised land.

Nothing else compares to knowing Jesus – to having a restored relationship with God through Jesus.

The question on the table is: ***do you believe this?***

If you do: what then? ***What does this mean for your life?***

It means you spend the rest of your life living in His presence.²⁷

“Where are you?” – that was the first question that God spoke to us.

The answer:

1. ***Either*** you are loitering in the shadows with your sin,
2. ***Or*** you are living in His presence with your Savior.

CLOSE:

What does it meant to live in the presence of God?

²⁷ John 15:4–5.