



# Jesus is Greater

What you believe to be true about Jesus is the most important thing about you. It matters more than your name, your career, your achievements, or anything else. Why is that? Because what you believe to be true about Jesus dictates your eternity. But what you believe to be true of Jesus must also dictate every other aspect of your life.

## WEEK ONE

Jesus is superior to Angels

**Message Passage:** Hebrews 1:1-14, Heb 2:1-4

**Small Group Passage:** Hebrews 2:5-18

### TEACHING AND VIDEO NOTES

If you had to describe yourself in a few short sentences, what would you mention? Maybe you would mention your family, if you are married or not. Maybe you would mention your career. For others, you would mention what you are passionate about. Do those things matter? Yes. But at the end of the day, our view of politics, our marital status, or our career field is not the most important thing about us. In fact, if we view these things as of utmost importance, we have given them a status beyond what scripture allows.

**Instead, it is what you believe to be true about Jesus that is the most important thing about you.** It matters more than your name, your career, your achievements, or anything else.

#### Why is that?

- *Our view of Jesus determines our eternity.* Who is Jesus to you? Is he your savior, deliverer, and messiah? Or is he something else? Heaven and hell hang in the balance of that question. That is why Jesus himself asked that question (Matt 16:13).

- What you believe to be true of Jesus must also dictate every other aspect of your life. Few books of the Bible make this point better than Hebrews. Page after page, the author of Hebrews wants his audience, as well as us, to understand that Jesus is greater than all. Because he is greater than all, we can live with a trust in his Lordship that shapes every part of our lives.

From the opening verses, we clearly see that Jesus is greater than all!

**Heb 1:1-3** *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

There is so much great theology packed into these verses.

- Vs 2, Jesus reveals God's very nature to us.
- Vs 2, Jesus is the heir of all things because he is the creator of all things
- Vs 3, Not only that, but Jesus is the sustainer of all things by his powerful word
- Vs 3, Finally, Jesus is the Savior of all who trust in Him

**Why this matters (we all need reminding):** The original recipients of this letter were not learning for the first time how much superior Jesus was to all things. They likely knew that. Yet they needed to be reminded of how much superior Jesus was... As do we.

**Heb 1:4** *So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.*

**Background of the letter:** Why would the author of Hebrews take the time to mention that Jesus is greater than Angels? Of course he is! Well, a couple of things

- We are not certain of the author's identity. Tradition says, Paul. Most believe today that Barnabus is the best option. I tend to agree.
- The original audience is also unclear. We do not know which church this letter was sent to. They could have been in North Africa, Asia Minor, or even in Italy. But wherever they were, it seems obvious that the congregation was made up of converted Jews who were facing opposition and even persecution.

**Why this matters (Jesus is greater even if others say no):** But why would the converted Jews, wherever it was that they gathered, need to hear this? Because believing in Jesus had cost them dearly, and outright persecution was increasing. What would they do? That opposition and persecution would all go away if they

caved to the pressure and claimed that Jesus was something less than the messiah and one true son of God, such as an angel.

**Heb 1:5-6** *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? 6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”*

**What status does Jesus have?** He was the one and only Son of God. As the one and only Son of God, he rightly deserved worship. Because he was and is God. Therefore, the angels worshiped Him.

**Heb 1:7-9** *In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.” 8 But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”*

**Put yourself in the shoes of those persecuted Jewish converts. What would you have done?** “If they would simply agree that Jesus was an angel, perhaps even the greatest of angels, but not God, they would be accepted into the synagogue and escape the awful pressure. Such a prospect was tantalizing because it did not require an outright denial of Christ, but only a different affirmation of him and his greatness as an angel. And the prospect was also face-saving because it did not deny they had a real experience with an exalted being.”<sup>1</sup>

But here is the thing about outside pressure to budge on who Jesus is. None of it changes the reality and truth of who Jesus is. We can budge on biblical Truth, but the Truth never changes.

**Heb 1:10-14** *He also says, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, 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 You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” 13 To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? 14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

**Are we in their shoes? No!** But there is real pressure today to budge on who Jesus is. There is pressure to claim Jesus is your savior but not your Lord. In the Bible belt, in

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 35–36,...

many circles, you are expected to claim that Jesus saves. But if you live as if he is the Lord of your life, they will call you extreme, a prude, or just avoid you altogether. There is pressure to claim that Jesus is one of many paths to the same God. Even though Jesus himself claimed to be the only way to know God (John 14:6).

But the Gospel demands, it calls us, and empowers us to not budge an inch on who Jesus is and who he claimed to be. That is what the author of Hebrews calls on us to do.

**Heb 2:1** *We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*

**Do not drift away.** The phrasing is quite intentional. The oppressed Jewish converts would not reject Jesus in a grand declaration for all to see and hear. No, just like us, they would be tempted to gradually and subtly drift away from the truth of who Jesus is and the obedience that he calls us to live out.

**Application:** We drift without knowing it. We drift without trying. Drifting does not require a concerted effort. In fact, it takes the absence of one. But just because something does not take effort does not mean that it does not have dire consequences.

**Heb 2:2-4** *For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, **3** how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. **4** God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

If we ignore the message of angels, there are dire consequences. How much more dire are the consequences if we ignore the message of Jesus? Especially when we consider the great signs and wonders that accompanied Jesus' teaching, chief among them conquering sin and death.

**Key Question:** How will we go about each day, remembering who Jesus is and living in light of that truth?

**Transition to Small Group:** It is not until we see how glorious Jesus is that we comprehend how much love and sacrifice he showed us by taking on flesh to be with us, and how we should respond.

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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What we believe about Jesus is the most important thing about us. No other question or belief matters more. This is why Jesus himself asked, “*Who do you say I am?*” (Matt. 16:13–20). Who do you say that Jesus is, and how has that answer shaped your life?

**Leader Note:** As the message highlighted, the answer to that question determines our eternity (John 14:6). The identity of Christ and who we are in him determines our eternity and, therefore, should shape every aspect of our day-to-day lives. We want to help people see that.

- Because Jesus has forgiven us, we are forgiven eternally. Amen! Now, how has that forgiveness shaped who you are and how you live your life?
  - Because of the blood of Jesus, we are adopted into the family of God and will be for all eternity. Amen! How does that Truth shape how you view yourself and others?
2. The audience of Hebrews faced pressure to compromise their understanding of Jesus’ identity. Instead of recognizing Him as the long-awaited Messiah and Son of God, they were tempted to reduce Him to something less—an angel or merely a prophet like Moses (Hebrews 3). This falls far short of who Jesus claimed to be (Matthew 16:13–20). In what ways does our culture today similarly attempt to redefine Jesus as something less than the one and only Son of God?
  3. What are practical ways that we can remind ourselves of who Jesus is each day?

**Leader Note:** There will be common answers to this question, such as scripture, prayer, and going to church. The hard part is that many people do all of these things and still drift from the truth of who Jesus is. Does that mean these things (disciplines and habits) are of no help in keeping us from drifting? By no means. But it does mean that we should ask why and with what mindset we read scripture, pray, and attend church. If we do it with a mindset of checking a religious check box for the day or week, they by no means help keep us from drifting. If anything, the monotonous, autopilot-like manner in which we do them is a sign that we are drifting.

**READ:** Hebrews 2:5-18

4. Vs 9 - Jesus, who was vastly greater than the angels, willingly took on flesh and was born in humble circumstances among us mere humans. How does remembering and celebrating this truth keep us from drifting from the Truth in our faith?

**Leader Note:** The Apostle Paul picks up this very idea in Philippians 2:1-11. He points out that Jesus willingly left glory to be with us so that we may be redeemed. Jesus faithfully chose humility all the way to the cross. In doing so, he proved his love for us for all time. But the cross was not the end of the story. Upon his resurrection, “God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil 2:9-10). Therefore, our humble savior is victorious, and we will be with him one day. Remembering this truth daily keeps us from drifting in our faith.

5. Vs 11 - Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. In fact, he declares us to be his own in the assembly. How does this good news change how we face the pressure to budge on who Jesus is in our own day?
6. Vs 14-15 - The Gospel of Jesus Christ defeated not only death, but also fear with it. However, fear can still creep back into our minds and lives, as it was for the audience of this letter. So how can the truth that Jesus is superior (to everyone and everything) help us when fear begins to creep into our lives?
7. Vs 18 - How does the fact that Jesus suffered and was tempted help us when we likewise face suffering and temptation?

**Leader Note:** The author of Hebrews brings up this very point again a few chapters later in chapter four, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”(Heb 4:15-16). Because Jesus suffered and was tempted as we are today, we can go to our savior in prayer, knowing that he not only sympathizes with our difficulties but also empathizes with them. He has lived a lifetime walking in our shoes, and yet he did not sin.

**PRAYER TIME**

**DISMISS**