

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

HEBREWS LESSON 2 (Chapters 1-2)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4). Hebrews 1 and 2 teach us about the supremacy of Christ over angels, and chapter 2 especially emphasizes how Jesus and the great salvation are something in which every person needs to take part. Welcome to our study of Hebrews 1 and 2.

The Hebrew writer opens this wonderful book by showing that today God speaks through His Son. Christ is greater than angels because He has delivered a greater revelation. And, Christ is greater than angels because He possesses a greater rank than angels. Notice Hebrews 1:1-2—“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” In the Old Testament, God spoke to the patriarchs at various times and in different ways. He may have spoken through the prophets, such as He did in the preaching of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Amos. Through some spokesperson, God would deliver His message. At times God spoke out of thunder or a storm (Ex. 19 and Deut. 5). God spoke to Elijah through a still, small voice (1 Kings 19). In the Old Testament, God spoke to Balaam through a donkey in order to deliver His revelation (Num. 22). And, in delivering the Old Testament on Mt. Sinai, Galatians 3:19 and Acts 7:53 state that God delivered that message to Moses through the hands of angels. The basic principle is that, during the Old Law, God used multiple and varied ways to speak to the people. But here is the message today: God now speaks to us through His Son. We no longer live in an age in which God is speaking in varied ways. Today God has spoken through Jesus, and that is the message we have. It is a wonderful message because we no longer have to wonder, “Is God speaking to me this way or that way?,” or “Do I need to be looking for a message from God?” The Bible says that God, in these last days, has spoken to us through His Son. The message of Jesus in the New Covenant is that the message has been given once for all time. In Jude 3 we are taught to “to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all delivered** to the saints.” In John 16:13 Jesus promised His disciples, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” During the time of the apostles, they were promised “all truth.” They wrote down that truth. James 1:23-25 says that we now possess the “perfect law of liberty.” Paul said, “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). Be encouraged today by knowing that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is everything you need. Paul said to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In the New Covenant (the all-inspired Word of God) we have everything we need to get to Heaven.

The fact that God has spoken to us through Jesus does away with several modern ideas. We are not going to hear a still, small voice in the middle of the night, through which God is speaking to us. Today, God speaks through His Son. We are not going to have any latter-day prophets. Today, God speaks through His Son. When Joseph Smith claimed that he received the Mormon tablets in Palmira, New York, in the 1800s, we can know that that is not true. Why? Because today God speaks to us through His Son. And if someone brings another Gospel, which by the way is not another Gospel, we are not to believe it, even if it is brought by an angel from Heaven (Gal. 1:6-9). Jesus is greater than angels because His revelation is the greatest revelation.

In Hebrews 1:2-4 Jesus also is seen as prophet, priest, and king.

“God has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Notice that today Jesus is the prophet to Whom we are to look. God “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” However, Jesus is not only a prophet, but also is a priest. He “purged our sins.” He made the sacrifice. He became the go-between between man and God. But He also was the sacrifice itself. Notice that Jesus is prophet, priest, and king. He “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Jesus is enthroned in Heaven. Revelation 19:16 says that He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He is the great and supreme Potentate (1 Tim. 6). He is to be the Lord of our lives. We must listen to His Word. We are to go to God through Christ as our sacrifice. And we are to honor and glory Him as the King of our lives.

In Hebrews 1:5ff. we learn that Jesus is greater in rank. That is, He carries a greater rank and name than angels. Hebrews 1:5 says, “For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You’? And again, ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’?” Jesus was given the name, “Son of God”—not “angel,” not “servant,” and not “ministering spirit,” but “Son of God.” John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Just as a son has more rights, more rank, and more power than a servant, so Jesus is greater than angels. Jesus, however, also wears another name—a name that some, because of denominational error, have failed to realize. But it is powerfully proclaimed in Hebrews 1:8-9, where God the Father calls Jesus “God.”

“But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’”

God said to the Son, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” We need to realize that Jesus is greater than angels because **Jesus is God**. To deny that is to deny the explicit teaching of Scripture. In John 20:28, when Thomas saw the nail prints in Jesus’ hand, he proclaimed, “My Lord and My God!” In John 10:30 we read Jesus words, “I and the Father are One.” John began his Gospel by saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). To deny Jesus His Godship is to deny His very person.

But notice also in Hebrews 1 that not only is Christ greater because He is God’s Son and God in the flesh, but Jesus also is seen in this text as being the Creator and the Destroyer of the Universe. Hebrews 1:10 says (speaking of Jesus), “

"You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."

Speaking of Jesus, the text says, "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth.... You will roll them up as a garment." In Colossians 1:15-16 we read that Jesus is the "firstborn over all creation, for by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But verse 26 says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image.'" The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all had a part in the Creation. Jesus is greater than angels because Jesus is the Son of God. He is God in the flesh, and He is the Creator of this Universe. Someone might say, "How does that apply to us today?" This is such a powerful message. So many people in our world today are enthralled with angels. Angel mania has overtaken us. There are books about things like "how to find out about your guardian angel" or "how to have a closer relationship with your angel," etc. Here is what we need to know today. Angels are ministering spirits. Under the Old Law, their purpose was to be a servant. Jesus is the Savior. We need to stop focusing on angels, and start focusing instead on Jesus as the Son of God, as God in the flesh, as the Creator of the Universe, and as the source of our salvation. We do not need to get caught up in unimportant things. Instead we must place the emphasis on Jesus.

But I believe there is even a deeper application. The Hebrew writer is writing to Christians to tell them not to glorify angels over Jesus. Here is the reason why. If you miss this, you have missed the main point. The angels delivered the Law of Moses (Gal. 3:19; Acts 7: 53). God wrote the law with His own finger, but the Bible tells us in those two passages that angels actually delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Who delivered the New Covenant? Was it angels? No. Jesus Himself—God in the flesh—delivered the New Covenant. So, which of these two laws—judged by the deliverer of each law—is greater? Is it the law that was delivered by angels? Or is it the law in which God's own Son came and spoke directly to us? Do you see the comparison? Christ is greater than angels, and by the very nature of both being deliverers of law systems, Christ is greater. Christ's covenant is greater than any delivered by angels.

In Hebrews 2 the writer leads directly into this point by showing that the salvation we have been promised through the New Covenant must not be neglected, because if we neglect it, we will not escape. Hebrews 2:1-3 says,

"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him."

We must give more earnest heed. Why? It is because "if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward," how is it going to be for us? Do you see the seriousness of obeying God's New Law? During the Old Testament, if people disobeyed the Law of Moses, people sometimes were stoned to death. Here, then, is the point the writer is making. Something worse will happen to us if we neglect so great a salvation! You might ask yourself, "What could be worse than breaking the law of God and having someone take you out and stone you to death?" People will perish eternally if they do not obey the Gospel of Christ! In 2 Thessalonians 1:8 we are told that God will come one day, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not

know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are told, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31) for “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). In Matthew 25:46 Jesus said that the unprofitable servant would be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, but the righteous will go into eternal life, while the unrighteous go into eternal death. That is why is so serious for us today to take advantage of this great salvation.

I want you to notice what makes this salvation so great. What is it that makes Christ and Christianity so great? There are many things we could mention, such as the blessings, the joy, the hope, etc. But Hebrews 2 identifies several things that make the Christian way so great. In Hebrews 2:9 we learn that Christ’s salvation is great because of the great sacrifice that He made. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Look away from the condemnation found in the Old Law, and look to Jesus. We need to see Jesus! Can’t you hear the joy and excitement in the writer’s voice? We see Jesus, Who was made “a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” The very fact that our Lord came to this Earth is one of the most-wonderful blessings and privileges that mankind has ever been granted. At the birth of Christ the angels sang, “Peace on Earth, and good will to men.” People rejoiced and brought gifts to the baby Jesus. It was a wonderful time when God’s only Son came to this world. But **why** did He come? His birth is not what we are to celebrate today. It is not what we remember. I am thankful to God that Jesus was born into this world, but notice the last part of Hebrews 2: 9 where we learn that Christ “tasted death for everyone.” The wonderful sacrifice that Jesus made is what makes Christianity so great. Remember, Hebrews 10:4 says that “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” If we lived under the Old Law, we would be reminded every year of our sins. We would be reminded of the fact that animal sacrifices could not take away our sins. But we see Jesus, Who “tasted death for everyone.” The death of Christ is what had the power to remove sin. God wants everyone to “be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). If we are honest with ourselves, we will realize that instead of Jesus, **we** are the ones who deserve to die. In Ezekiel 18:4 the Bible says, “The soul who sins shall die.” That was our condemnation. Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death.” Paul said to the Christians in Ephesians 2:1 and 2:5, “You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” If we honestly consider the facts, we will realize that all of us—because of our own sins (Rom. 3:23; 5: 12)—deserve to face spiritual death. But look again. Jesus “tasted death for everyone.” We are told in 1 Peter 2:24 that Jesus “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” On the cross, Jesus bore my sins and your sins so that we would not have to bear the guilt or consequences of sin. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we are told, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” We need to thank God that Jesus was willing to suffer, die, and become the great sacrifice for us. This is what makes Christianity so much greater—the great sacrifice of Jesus.

Another great thing in chapter 2 is the fact that we have a greater captain or greater leader. Notice Hebrews 2:10—“It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Christianity is great because we have a great captain and leader. There were great leaders under the Old Law, such as Noah (who led his family to the ark), Moses (who led God’s people out of Egypt), and Joshua (who led the Israelites into the Promised Land). But none is greater than Jesus because Jesus is able to lead us to Heaven itself. Jesus is the captain of our salvation. He has gone before us to prepare the way.

If we follow Him, He will make sure that we get to Heaven. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Hear me well today. If you will follow Jesus as the captain of your salvation, and if you will faithfully do what He says, obey His will, put aside prejudices and biases, and make up your mind that whatever the Lord says you will do, it will be impossible for you not to go to Heaven. That is the kind of captain and leader that we have. If we step in line behind Him, follow Him as Lord and leader, and do whatever He says, you can be sure that you will make it through this life victoriously and that you will make it to Heaven itself.

In Hebrews 2 another great thing about our salvation is that we have the greater victory. Look in Hebrews 2:14. Jesus tasted death for everyone. He is the great captain. But look at what His death did.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Jesus came to this Earth, lived, and died. But in dying, Jesus destroyed death and conquered the devil. In 1 Corinthians 15:55 we read, "O death, where is your sting?" Death has been defeated through Christ. Does that mean that we are not going to die? No. We **are** going to die. Hebrews 9:27 teaches that. But it means this. Just as Jesus arose from the grave, John 5:28-29 says that all will one day come forth out of the grave. But not only did Jesus defeat death for our sakes; He also defeated our greatest enemy. He, through His death, conquered him "who had the power of death, that is, the devil." From the time of Genesis 3, the devil has been man's archenemy, and has been trying to cause us to lose our souls. He tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. And when they ate it, the doors to sin were opened up. Each person sins because of his or her own choice, but the devil tempts us to sin. The devil tempted Job to curse God and die. The devil was seen as a tempter of some of the people in the New Testament as well. We must realize that the devil is a very serious foe. In 1 Peter 5:8 we are told that the devil "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Jesus said to Peter, "Satan desires to have you that he might sift you as wheat" (Lk. 22). But here is the good news. Yes, Satan is a powerful adversary. But Jesus, by His death, has already defeated the devil. The principle for us is this: Our salvation is greater because if we follow Jesus, and if we stay true to Him, through Him we can defeat the devil. The devil will not win over us if we remain true to Jesus. In Revelation 2:10 the Bible says that we are to be "faithful unto death" so that we can receive "the crown of life." "Thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

But realize this, too. The salvation we possess is greater because of the greater helper and aid that Christians are given in this life. In Hebrews 2:18 we find such an encouraging passage: "In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Jesus faced things just like we do. Hebrews 4:15 says that He was "tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." He lived a human life. He faced temptation. He faced sickness. He faced things like we face. But the Bible says that since He was tempted and since He suffered like we have suffered, He is able to aid those who are being tempted. This salvation is the best! There is nothing greater than it because we have as our Savior the Son of God—God in the flesh—to help us through this life. Could you ask for any greater help than that? If I hoped to accomplish something—no matter how high or lofty my goal might be—I would want to sit down and talk to someone who had already done it. Did you know that you can have the help of someone who has already defeated the devil, who has already overcome sin, and who has already faced the most-severe temp-

tation you could ever imagine (Mt. 4) and was victorious over it? Today we can have the help of Jesus Christ in overcoming sin, self, and Satan if we look into His Word and follow the Scriptures. Jesus is able to help us in this life—if we will just let Him. That means that we are to follow His example. We are to walk in His footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21). We are to imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). We are to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). We are to say the same things that Jesus spoke. And when we face trials and temptations in life, we need to look to the example of Jesus. That is why the Bible was written—so that we could learn about salvation and look to Christ’s example to see how we are supposed to live, walk, and teach in this life.

The basic lesson of Hebrews 1 and 2 is that Christ is greater than angels, and that His salvation is the greatest. Today if you are not a child of God, let me ask you, “How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation?” Look at what God has offered us today. We have hope and help through Jesus and His salvation. If you are not a child of God, why would you **not** want to take advantage of that? Your sins can be washed away (Acts 2:38). You can get a second chance (2 Cor. 5:17). You can have hope, help, and real purpose in this life. Why not today take advantage of the great sacrifice that has been offered. There is no other hope. Jesus is the only way. You can become a Christian today by doing what people did in the first century. First, you must hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Second, you then must believe that Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus said in John 8:24, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Third, you must repent of the things in your life that are not right. Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). Fourth, you then must confess the name of Jesus. In Acts 8:37 the Ethiopian eunuch proclaimed, “I believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God.” You must do the same. Fifth, you must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. In Acts 2:37 the Jews cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The answer in Acts 2:38 was this: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Have you taken advantage of this great salvation? If not, I hope that today you will allow Jesus to reign supreme in your life by obeying the Gospel and being faithful unto death.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR HEBREWS LESSON 2 (CHAPTERS 1-2)

1. According to Hebrews 1:1-2, how does God speak to people today?
2. In Hebrews 1:4 we learn that Christ is better than someone else. Who is that someone else?
3. According to Galatians 3:19 and Acts 7:53, who delivered the Law to Moses?
4. What, according to James 1:25, do we possess today?
5. In 1 Corinthians 14:37, who or what did the apostle Paul say was the source of all the things he wrote?
6. How does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 describe Scripture?
7. According to the last part of Hebrews 1:3, Jesus did something for us. What was it?
8. What, according to Hebrews 10:4, would not take away our sins?
9. What, according to Hebrews 10:12, was able to take away our sins?
10. In Hebrews 1:8-9, by what name is Christ called?
11. In Revelation 19:16, what title is conferred upon Christ?
12. In Hebrews 1:5 Jesus was not given the name of "angel," but instead was given another name. What was that name?
13. What activity does Hebrews 1:10 attribute to Jesus?
14. What critically important question is asked in Hebrews 2:3?
15. In 2 Thessalonians 1:8 we are told that God will come one day, "in flaming fire taking vengeance" on someone. Who is that someone?
16. According to Matthew 25:46, where will evil people be after this life has ended?
17. According to Hebrews 2:9, what did Jesus do for every person?
18. In 1 Timothy 2:4, what did Paul say that God wants?
19. What does 1 Peter 2:24 say that Christ did for us?
20. According to Hebrews 2:10, what relationship does Christ sustain to us today?
21. According to John 14:6, what is the only way for us to approach God?
22. What encouragement does Hebrews 2:18 provide for us today?