

GREATER THAN ALL!



As far as I know, I've never met an angel.

If would be something if I did or you did, wouldn't it? Go home and in the living room was a genuine, bonafide angel (glow, large wings). Think about the conversation you'd have with your friends of family?

But if you were to say that to the writer of Hebrews, he might say, "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

Because what the writer of this book wants to show us that is one far greater than any other spiritual being – even greater than the archangel. He wants to show us Jesus and that Jesus is Greater than All. Jesus is Greater Than All. Main point.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This letter is one we don't know very much about. NT made up of many letters or epistles. Most we know who wrote them. And we know to whom they were written to. "This is from Paul to the church in Corinth, or Rome, etc."

But this book, we are unsure who humanly wrote this letter. There are a number of good ideas, but we don't know. I think it's safe to say that if God thought we needed to know, he would have had the person sign it. (many scholars have guesses but we don't know)

And we don't know specifically to whom this letter was written to. It may have been meant to go to a number of churches – not sure.

But we can have a pretty good idea of the type of person the letter was written to.

It was written to people who were Jews. Christian Jews. Follow Laws and traditions then heard about Jesus Christ and that he rose from the dead, and they put their faith in Him as the Messiah and became Jewish Christians.

But as time went on they experienced problems because of their faith in Jesus. Persecution that came to these Jewish Christians. Other Jews were antagonistic toward them. Great clash. Thrown out of the synagogue for example...

It was not just what they believed, but there were consequences or changes when these Jews believed in Jesus. Some of the Old Testament laws they saw were fulfilled in Jesus. Like the food laws. And they

were persecuted for not doing what the other Jews were doing.

And it is most likely that as a result of this persecution and pressure, these Jewish Christians were starting to think that maybe it would be easier just to ratchet things back. "We can still believe in Jesus, but we will also act like our Jewish friends and not worry about living out our faith to the fullest. We'll concentrate on the things that are important to our family and friends, we'll keep the Law and we'll pull in our faith just a little bit. And things will be easier."

And then this letter is written to them, to encourage them and to show them how much they would lose if they try to turn the clock back and go back. (us too). It's written to show two things

One. How much Christianity is built on the foundation of the Old Testament. You can't read the book of Hebrews without realizing how important the Old Testament is to understand what the New Testament says.

Sadly, too many Christians think, "Well I'll just focus on the New Testament and I'll maybe read Genesis or the Psalms, but the rest is not so important because now we have the New Testament."

Well if we read Hebrews were left with the overwhelming impression that the Old Testament is vital to what the New Testament is all about. The Old Testament is like the first act of a two part play. And the New Testament is the second part. But both are important! The New Testament is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament.

Two. The second thing that we learn is How much greater is what we learn about God in the New Testament.

Because the Old Testament story pointed forward. And it's what it points to that is most important. Like in a play, it's the last act where it all comes together and reaches a finale. It shows what we couldn't understand before and makes it all clear. It brings everything to completion.

And what the writer wants to do and say to these Jewish believers who were tempted to roll the clock back is say, "if you try and go back just to the Old

Testament and ignore what's new, you missing out on the greatest things God has done or will ever do." He wants to show us how much greater what we have now is than what they (and we) had before.

And what we are going to do in the weeks ahead is go section by section and see how important the Old Testament is, but also see how much greater are the things now revealed to us in Jesus Christ and in the New Testament.

So today I want to look at just the first 4 verses.

He shows how much greater the Lord Jesus Christ is. Tell us that Jesus Christ is greater in four ways.

I. JESUS HAS A GREATER VOICE - vv. 1-2A

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)¹ *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,* ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...*

Do you see what He's telling us here? In verse 1 he's telling us that God has Spoken! How great is this truth from the Old Testament that God has spoken. (talked earlier about meeting an angel, but this is better).

If we want to find out about God, we can be encouraged because "God has spoken." What if God was silent? Sometimes we wonder if God is silent?

v. 1 *God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways*, is pointing to the Old Testament. Many ways God spoke. By the prophets....

But he goes on in **v.2** to say it doesn't happen that way any more. Now he speaks to US, and how? He does it, not through the prophets, but *by his Son*.

In the past if you wanted to know about God, you go to a prophet and a prophet would talk to God for you and he would tell you. But now, it's not like that because we've got this greater prophet, the Lord, Jesus Christ. Through his works and words, he speaks to us. And if we want to know what God is like, we don't have to go to a prophet, but we can go to the Lord, Jesus Christ and by looking at Jesus Christ we can find out what God is like, because as we'll see in v.3. Jesus *is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being*.

Three ways Jesus has a greater voice:

1. He is a Son and not a Prophet.

He really is the Son of God and it makes his voice

far greater.

2. He speaks with One Voice not many Voices. See the Contrast between v.1 and v.2. Before, sometimes he spoke in a vision, or a dream, or by a prophet. Sometimes God spoke through a foreign nation bringing judgment. He spoke in many different voices. Never quite sure what was coming next.

But now he speaks to us through Jesus Christ. One voice.

3. God spoke once for all. Do you see again the contrast in v.1 and v.2? In the Past God spoke *at many times* but now he speaks *in these last days he has spoken*.

Once for all. It's not a speech that continues necessarily, but this voice echoes down through the ages and it still speaks to us today. He has spoken, past tense, to US.

His voice was spoken (past tense) but can still be heard today. He doesn't need to come back and speak next week, and then a few months after that. That's what the prophets had to do. The prophet would have to come again and again.

But that's not what Jesus does. He has spoken and his words are just as true and powerful to US today as it was to them. Why? Because his voice is powerful and final. Jesus Christ spoke "once for all" so to speak, so all can know the glories of God.

II. JESUS CHRIST IS A GREATER PERSON - v. 2B-3A

1. Because he was appointed heir of all things – everything created has been given to Jesus Christ. All is given to Jesus Christ. Everything we can see. Everything throughout time. The universe and all in it.

There were many great men/women before and after Jesus. Moses, etc. but none match up to Jesus Christ. Powerful men, Important, Compassionate men...

2. Because he is the creator of all.

Through whom he made the universe – he's greater than any others who are creative. Are you good at making things? Most people are good at something. (cakes, Lego sets) But Jesus is greater – because he made the universe!

Some wrongly teach that there was a time that Jesus didn't exist and then at some point the Father created Jesus. That is absolutely not true. There was never a time when Jesus Christ did not exist because he is the Creator Himself of all things!

God always existed even before time itself existed.

3. Because he is the Visible Image of God.

Hebrews 1:3a (NIV)³ *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,*

Look at Jesus Christ and you are seeing God. You want to know what God is like? You only have to look at Jesus Christ. He will show you what God is like. He is just like God, because he IS God.

Some have corrupted this... But before we finish chapter 1 we'll see that this is true. (tonight in Colossians too)

And that's also why Jesus is greater than anyone else. He speaks with a GREATER VOICE and he is a GREATER PERSON and...

III. JESUS HAD DONE A GREATER WORK - V. 3B

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.

1. He Keeps Everything Going

v. 3b *sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

Not only created by Jesus Christ... he keeps everything going. The stars are in motion....we are breathing air,

Shows the importance and power of his Word.

Atlas - world on his back

2. He Cleanses us of our sins.

v.3c *...he had provided purification for sins,*

This is the greatest work of all. The amazing work that the Lord Jesus came to do.

Sustaining all things - he could do that from heaven. He could do that again was doing that before he became a man and came down to earth. But here is the one thing he came down to earth to do. To cleanse us of our sins. To wipe out to purge, to do away with. To deal once and for all, never to return again, if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How did He do it? Did He have lots of help? Did he use his disciples? Did the angels help him? No. He *alone* came and provided purification for sins.

He was the only one who can do it. He was the

only one, by virtue of his unique nature, both God and man to do it.

And now, having done that great work, what is he doing now? He has *sat down on his throne, at the right-hand of the father.* He's finished his work. It's done.

That's not to say he's putting his feet up. He has other work to do. He makes intercession for us and hears our prayers. But the point is his great work of salvation is done. It's finished. It's complete.

Even though there are sins that you and I have not yet even committed, yet Jesus Christ has cleansed even though the sentence. If we are truly in him. If we have trusted him.

He speaks with a GREATER VOICE. He is a GREATER PERSON. He has done a GREATER WORK. And now, fourthly...

IV. HE HAS A GREATER NAME - V. 4

You see, even in the way we communicate and speak. Say that as a child who belongs to a neighbor. Most often it's a grandchild that you're describing to a friend. You might say, "oh, she's a little angel." Normally parents don't say that about their own children.

What's the best they can say? "He's an angel." It's a great name to attribute to someone. When you want to describe someone in the best possible light - "oh they are an angel."

But we are told here that Jesus Christ has a name so much better than even the angels. He has a greater name, a greater reputation, a greater standing.

And here's a somewhat strange part of verse 4. It says "*So he "became" superior, and he has "inherited" a name that is superior?* We want to say, "Well Jesus, you're the son of God. You have always been the son of God. You created the angels, Jesus. Surely you have always been better than the angels!"

That is true, but this is trying to convey something more than that. The word translated "name", the Greek word ὄνομα at times carries the idea of "reputation".

For example, in **Jn. 6:14** it says *King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known.* It was not just that they now knew his personal name, but that his reputation was growing and spreading.

Also, in **Revelation 3:1**, Jesus speaking to the dead

church of Sardis says, *'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.'*

When Jesus completed his great work of salvation, that he always planned to do, that he always intended to do; as he did that great work -- As he came to earth, As He lived a sinless life, as he was beaten and crucified. As He died. As he was raised from the dead. As he was victorious over sin. Ascended into heaven, took his place on the throne. Then it was possible for all to see now that what was always true that Jesus is so much greater than anything else.

The angels saw God in a way that he was not seen before. Now they understood more than they ever understood before. When they saw what Jesus came to do and did it! He so to speak, made a greater "name for Himself." In fact **1 Peter 1:12** tells us that the angels long to understand more of the salvation that Jesus Christ won for mankind!

CONCLUSION

He's spoken with the greater voice because he's a greater person and He's done a greater work. And because he's done a greater work he inherits a greater name/reputation in heaven and on earth.

So where does this leave us? It leaves us surely understanding that there's nobody like the Lord Jesus Christ. It leaves us understanding that if we're going to sort out anything in our lives that we need to come to grips with Jesus.

We need to come to Him and understand him and get to know him.

- We need to hear his VOICE.
- We need to understand his PERSON.
- We need to experience his WORK.
- And we need to bow and magnify his GREAT NAME.

That's of Hebrews wants us to do. And that's the great message of the Gospel. It's gone now across the nation soon around the globe. From generation to generation - people experiencing the Lord Jesus Christ.

It calls us to respond to him. We're not responding to the church or even to this sermon. We're responding to Jesus Christ. Because he's alive today.

The question is simply how will we respond to Jesus, this great one?

- There are many try to ignore him, but you cannot ignore someone as great as this.
- There are many who dismiss him. But surely you cannot ignore this one.
- There are many who hate him, in their perversity and sin.

The writer of Hebrews wants us to understand that he is the one who has come down from heaven with a purpose. What? To win us, to draw us to himself. To cleanse us from our sins and allow us to share in his riches and inheritance.

2:3 ³ *how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?*