

1

Hebrews 1 v 1 – 2 v 4

THE GREATEST REVELATION

talkabout

1. Imagine that early this morning the government issued orders to begin persecuting Christians in your local community. Before the day is over, you have witnessed a group of Christians beaten up by a mob in a nearby town centre; you've been spat upon by a colleague; you've been told about a close friend, evicted from her home because of her Christian faith; the building where your church meets has been vandalised; on TV news you have watched angry citizens make vicious threats towards Christians and curse the name of Jesus; and you have heard rumours that anyone caught attending a church service on Sunday will be arrested.

What would you do? How would you respond? Who would you look to for help?

Many years ago, a community of Christians in the Roman Empire didn't have to imagine such persecution—they experienced it. These believers didn't pretend to answer questions about how to respond—they were forced to. And forced to think about who they could turn to for help. The author of Hebrews gave them the answer: Jesus, God's supreme Son.

investigate

Read Hebrews 1 v 1-4

2. Look at v 1-2. How did God speak in the past, and how has He spoken now? Who has He spoken to?

DICTIONARY

Prophet (v 1):
someone given a message from God, for an audience chosen by God.

Purification (v 3):
a process which removes imperfections.

3. What do you think the phrase “last days” means (v 2)?



explore more

optional

It has been said that verse 2 holds “the interpretative key” that unlocks the meaning of the Old Testament.

▶ **Read Luke 24 v 25-27 and 44-47**

What is Jesus saying in these verses?

How will this help us when we read the Old Testament?

When we hear Bible teaching, how will it help us to judge between right and wrong interpretations?

4. Look at verses 2-4. List all that is said in these verses about who Jesus is and what He has done.



apply

5. Why would it be important for a troubled, persecuted church to be presented with this rich portrait of who Jesus is?



- Which of these statements would comfort you in times of persecution?

- Which of these statements are most easily forgotten when life is easy?



investigate

▶ Read Hebrews 1 v 5-14

“Angel” means messenger. Most commonly it refers to angelic beings, although it can also refer to a human servant of God. In chapter 2 we are told that the Old Testament law was spoken by angels (2 v 2).

6. Identify five ways in which Jesus is greater than angels.

- v 5:

- v 6:

- v 7-9:

- v 10-12:

- v 13-14:

DICTIONARY

Firstborn (v 6): your heir—the one who, traditionally, would one day inherit everything you had.

Sceptre (v 8): a ceremonial staff carried by rulers as a symbol of their authority.

Ministering (v 14): helping.





explore more

optional

▶ Read 1 Peter 1 v 10-12

Verse 12 says that angels long to look into the things of the gospel. Pause and think about that for a moment. God has ordered the world so that redeemed men and women have full exposure to the gospel message about Jesus, but angels don't have this understanding. Amazing!

What is your reaction to this privilege we have?

What difference should it make in our lives?

▶ Read Hebrews 2 v 1-4

7. Compare 1 v 2 and 2 v 1. Why must we “pay the most careful attention ... to what we have heard”?

- Why do you think the writer has waited for 15 verses before giving this first command?

8. The writer warns us against “drifting away” (2 v 1). What do you think might have been the source of distraction for these believers?



- What does the writer say is the answer to drifting away (2 v 1)?

9. Look at v 2-3a. What is “the message spoken through angels” (see **Galatians 3 v 19**)?

- How does “the message spoken through angels” compare with the supreme message that God has now spoken in Jesus? (Think about content, messenger, and consequences of disobedience.)

	The law	The gospel
Content		
Messenger		
Consequences of disobedience		



➔ **apply**

10. What distracts you from paying careful attention to the gospel message?

- How can we help one another stay focused on the message of Jesus Christ?

☰ **getting personal**

If some Christians from my church were to spend the day with me, what would they see me paying most attention to? What would I like them to see?

11. What have you learned in this session...

- about Jesus Christ?

- to help you understand what the Bible is about?

- about the temptation we all have to drift away?

⬆ **pray**

Let your answers to Q4 shape a time of prayer and thanksgiving.



2 Hebrews 2 v 5-18

THE GREATEST MAN

The story so far

Jesus is God's greatest revelation. So we need to pay attention to Him, and never drift away.

talkabout

1. Imagine the only information that you had about Jesus was Hebrews chapter 1. What would be your view of Him?

investigate

Read Hebrews 2 v 5-9

2. Look at verses 6-7a (quoting from Psalm 8). How is Jesus ("a son of man") compared with the angels?

DICTIONARY

Subject to (v 8):
under the rule of.

- Compare verses 6-7a with 1 v 4. What is the full picture of Jesus' identity?

3. Look at verses 8 and 9 (Note: “them” is better translated “him”). What truth about Jesus do we not see at present?

- What truth about Jesus can a Christian “see” by faith?

4. According to verse 9, why was Jesus crowned with glory and honour?



explore more

optional

▶ Read Psalm 8

Before New Testament writers (such as the writer of Hebrews) applied this psalm to Jesus, people read it simply as a description of God’s purpose for humanity.

What is the position of humans compared to God (v 1-4)?

What is the position of humans compared to the rest of creation (v 6-8)?

What would you say makes a good ruler?

How do we see humanity failing to rule creation today?

Jesus has come and lived the life that the first humans, Adam and Eve, and all other humans have been unable to live. If you know some of the stories in the Gospels, discuss some of the ways in which Jesus’ life fulfilled God’s purpose for humanity.



→ apply

5. Why would verses 8-9 be comforting to suffering Christians?

- How will our lives look different when we believe that nothing is outside the sovereign control of Jesus Christ? (See, for example, Acts 5 v 27-32.)

⋮ getting personal

What stops me from believing that nothing is outside the sovereign control of Jesus? What can help me to rest in this truth?

↓ investigate

▶ Read Hebrews 2 v 10-18

In verse 10 Jesus is called the “pioneer” (or “founder”, “author” or “captain”) of our salvation. This Greek word can also be translated as “champion” or “hero”. Unlike us, Jesus did not suffer death as a hopeless, helpless prisoner of that enemy, but as a conqueror.

6. Look at verses 14-15. What was the purpose of Jesus’ death?

DICTIONARY

Pioneer (v 10): creator.

Holy (v 11): set apart; totally pure.

High priest (v 17): the head priest. He was the man who, in Old Testament Israel, once a year entered the part of the Temple God dwelled in to present the sacrifice of atonement.

Atonement (v 17): an act which brings two people from enmity to friendship.

7. According to verses 10-18, for what purposes did Jesus become human?

• v 10:

• v 11:

• v 12:

• v 14:

• v 18:

• Why is it important that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human?
(What would be lost if He were only divine? Or if He were only human?)

8. Verse 17 describes Jesus as “a merciful and faithful high priest”.
What is the job of a high priest mentioned in this verse?

In Old Testament times, only the high priest could make atonement for the sins of the people. He had to be clean and properly dressed before he could enter the Most Holy Place (the innermost part of the Tabernacle), and he could only enter the Most Holy Place with the blood of animals that had been killed. (Leviticus 16 explains this in detail.)

• How do you think this job has been done by Jesus?



9. In verse 17, the words “that he might make atonement for the sins of the people” can also be translated “that he might turn aside God’s wrath, taking away the sins of the people” (see NIV1984 footnote). What extra insight does this translation give into what Jesus has done for us?

➔ **apply**

10. How do people who don’t know the gospel try to deal with the problem of death?

- How should a Christian view of death be different, according to this part of Hebrews?

11. In what way is the word “brother” (see NIV footnote, v 17) a helpful term for understanding Jesus and the relationship believers have with Him?

⬆ **pray**

As you praise God for Jesus, think of people you know who don’t know Him. Spend some time in prayer for them, praying that they would come to know the high priest, brother, and death-tasting hero that you have found in Jesus.

