

Let's recap some of the Foundational truths we learned from our walk through the first 7 chapters of Genesis: (ask/discuss)

- God Ordered, Filled, and Rested
- The LORD created a universal throne room, a holy temple where he would dwell, rule, and share his image and rule with man and woman.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day REST – abiding – was the goal of creation.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> day rest was disrupted by man and women choosing to rest themselves.
- The heart of Cain resists God's counsel and chooses to wander,
- *"If you do well, will you not be accepted"* = forgiven, fetched, held up, raised, pardoned, married, regarded, restored.

What we see throughout the entire Old Testament, is a gracious God, pursuing stubborn, immature, short sighted, rebellious men and women, in order to **bring them back into his REST** = Abiding and living with HIM.

In God's kindness he continues to extend grace and invitation to rest

- Cain
- Noah = whose name means rest – Reestablishes his covenant with him; Gen 9: *"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth... subdue it."*
- Abraham
- Moses – Take people into his rest
- Sabbath day, Passover = Rest in me
- Sacrificial system – cleansing for sin so you can rest, abide in relationship.

In all of the gracious, kind, longsuffering acts to bring His people back into His rest/presence/life with Him, he is always pointing out to a perfect salvation; a perfect vessel in which to find safety, a covenant to end all covenants, a sacrifice to end all sacrifices, a leader who brings peace, a Messiah to bring salvation, a King who gives rest.

Now we fast forward to the book of Hebrews; This is a unique book of the NT in that we are not really sure who the author is or **exactly** he is writing to. We do know from hints within the letter, that he was a second-generation Christian, eye-witness to the events of the early church, teacher of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and interacted with the early apostolic leaders.

As far as his audience; while we do not know for sure, it is most likely the author was writing back from an unknown location to Jewish believers in Rome. Wherever their location; he is writing to Jewish Christians, facing persecution and hardship for their commitment to Jesus, and tempted to return to the old familiar ways of their past, rather than press forward in faith and trust.

The authors main point to his recipients; **"You can't turn back Jesus is BETTER." Whatever you relied on in the past are weaker versions of what is before you. He is better If you turn back, You are turning away from God's best. If you ignore God's Word through Jesus, you ignore God himself!!**

And so the letter follows this pattern: The presentation of a previous covenant, or person, or system that God used to point to or establish a relationship with Him, and then proof as to why Jesus is BETTER, why JESUS is SUPREME over all foreshadowing's of REST. Then following each comparison and contrast and corollary argument for Jesus' supremacy, there is a strong warning or admonishment to **Hold FAST to JESUS!**

Chapters	The "Jesus is BETTER" Message	Warning!
1-2	Jesus is Better than Angels & the Torah	You will not escape judgment if you ignore Jesus
3-4	Jesus is BETTER than Moses & Promised Land	You have no rest if you don't rest in Jesus
5-7	Jesus is BETTER than Priests & Kings	Rejecting Jesus is rejecting reconciliation with God
8-10	Jesus is BETTER than sacrifice & covenants	You will stay in your sinful state and receive judgment if Christ is not your sacrifice
11	Examples of Faith despite difficulty and lack of sight (always hard to grow and let go!)	
12	Difficulty will drive you away from God, or toward Him, let it train you in faith	
13	Commit yourself wholeheartedly and fully to following Jesus in practical living	

That is the overview of the book, and the pattern of the book. With that context in mind, let's look at the opening to the book of Hebrews.

*1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God **spoke to our fathers by the prophets,** <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has **spoken to us by his Son,** whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become as **much superior to angels** as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*

As the author begins his message, the pattern of JESUS is BETTER is important. And at the outset he wants to inform us of a few key things;

1. God has **SPOKE** in **many** times and in **many** ways. He has **always** been **communicating** to people in all kinds of different ways.
2. Up to this point in his speaking he has used both men (Prophets, just like us) and divine messengers = Angels.
3. **Jesus is BETTER than/SUPERIOR to all** previous ways God has revealed Himself to His people.
4. v 2b, As we learned in Genesis; Jesus **created the World**; When God enters/engages with our world of time and space, he does so primarily in the form/person of JESUS!
5. V. 3 – the author uses two analogies to make this is making an astounding claim using two analogies
  - **Radiance of the Glory** – The rays of the sun – Mediator and physical manifestation
  - **Imprint of his nature** – The wax imprint of a signature ring.
  - For the author these metaphors connect Jesus and God in inseparable union.
6. *"He [Jesus/God] upholds the universe by the word of His Power!"*
7. Because of this, he is the only one capable of making purification – atonement for sins.
8. Sits down with authority at God's right hand
9. V. 4 Superior to angels... more excellent = BETTER.

### **JESUS is THE BEST MESSAGE about GOD ever!!**

Because the author is writing to primarily Jewish audience, he authenticates the message of verse 4 four with a list of 7 (perfect – completion) verses from the OT: (if you don't believe me believe the OT)

- Vs 5; Psalm 27
- Vs 5b; 2 Sam 7:14

- Vs 6; Duet 32:43
- Vs 7; Psalm 104:4
- Vs 8-9; Psalm 45:6-7
- Vs 10-13a; Psalm 102:25-27
- Vs 13b; Psalm 101:1

Vs 14; all the messengers serve THE MESSAGE about JESUS

2:1 – Warning = Pay attention to Jesus’ Message. It is the Best message of all. He is the BETTER messenger than all the rest. Don’t neglect it, Don’t neglect HIM.

- Watching a video of two men- I don’t think they are believers, but both willing to be intellectually honest: Dr. Jordan Peterson and Dr. Peter Kreeft; great arguments from philosophy and reason for the Flesh, free will and God’s sovereignty and our need for a truth message outside of us not inside. – When many people/leaders are falling away from God, these men are coming closer... why is that? They have read the Bible more times and more thoroughly than many believers.

Application for us:

1. Jesus is BETTER than all other messengers!
  - a. Believe Him and his message,
  - b. Pay much closer attention to the message you have heard

Here in Hebrews the author is talking about messages that were true, just insufficient in and of themselves. Jesus is better. Verse 2:2 says, *“since the message declared by angles **proved to be reliable...**”* If Jesus is supreme/better than all the other true messages, he is certainly a better messenger than false messages you and I have received.

2. Jesus is BETTER than your message about measuring up (Growing up in a religious or performance-based home)
  - a. Tempted to portray a moral uprightness
  - b. Always performing, always impressing people
  - c. Always distancing yourselves because you always have some shame, something to hide
3. Jesus is BETTER than your message about self-superiority
  - a. Comparing yourself and against others and coming out on top - your behavior may not be any better, you’ll readily admit that (wear as a badge of honor and humility) by, by golly, your motives certainly are better.
4. Jesus is BETTER than your message about being too far broken (growing up in godless or shame-based home)
  - a. Always on alert, always assessing situations and relationships to avoid hurt, preemptively thinking through every scenario so you can survive.
5. Jesus is BETTER than your message about man centered sanctification
  - a. Overwhelmed with your flesh and your past,
  - b. Got to solve all problems going backward so we can move forward
  - c. Obey, right now, have faith, right now, live in faith right now