**January 3 - Hebrews 1**

You might be wondering, “Why are we starting the reading plan in Hebrews?” Simply because Hebrews is the best bridge between the Old Testament and New Testament. The point of the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is superior to anything found in the Old Covenant Judaism. In making his point, the author of Hebrews summarizes much of the Old Testament and reveals how Jesus is the fulfillment of the types and shadows of the law.

Zoom in on these three truths today:

1. Jesus is the final revelation of God.

Read verses 1-3 again. The author does not undermine the patriarchs or the prophets, but he does reveal that Jesus is far superior to them in every way. God has now spoken to us by the Son of God, not weak and sinful men. God has revealed Himself to us through His own Son through whom the world was created. Jesus is described as the “radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature.” God is not visible to us. But Christ has ‘imaged’ the Father to us. He is a perfect display of who God is. This is why Jesus was able to say to Thomas, “Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father.” – John 14:9.

1. Jesus is better than angels.

The argument in chapters 1-2 revolves around the fact that Jesus is better than angels. You and I probably don’t have a problem with that concept. But, this was a major issue in the early church. In fact, if you study the book of Colossians you will see that one of the biggest heresies that had begun to seep into that church was the worship of angels.

Angels are incredible beings that the Lord has created to carry out His purposes. There are a few simple points of comparison the author makes.

1. Jesus is God’s Son, angels are not – verse 5
2. Angels worship Jesus, Jesus does not worship angels – verse 6
3. Jesus is anointed as the eternal heavenly king, angels are not – verse 7-13
4. The author uses lots of Old Testament quotes.

As you can already tell, the book of Hebrews is chock full of Old Testament quotes. Sections of this book are practically a commentary on the Psalms. This is one of the reasons why this book is so helpful in bridging the gap between the covenants.

For further study: Consider looking up all of the Old Testament passages and reading them in context.

**January 4 – Hebrews 2**

Today we continue the argument that Jesus is better than angels. However, we also see the first of many warnings that will pop up in the book of Hebrews. Here are a few things to watch for as we see these warnings throughout the book.

1. This book is written to people who have professed faith in Christ, but are in danger of walking away from Jesus and back into Judaism. We see that in verse one of our text today, he refers to this as ‘drift.’
2. All of the warnings of this book revolve around the concept of persevering in the faith. More than any other book, this one hammers home the concept that only those who persevere to the end will be saved.
3. Although these warnings are against returning to Judaism, they all apply to us as well. You and I are likely not tempted to go back to temple worship or animal sacrifices. But, we are called to pursue Christ and not return to whatever we loved and worshiped before we followed Christ.
4. All of the warning passages indicate that God will judge those who do not heed the warnings. In our passage today we see this at the end of verse 2 and verse 3. When speaking about just retribution for sin, the author asks, “how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?”

For further study: One of the most glorious theological truths that we find in chapter 2 is that Jesus became our High Priest in order to “make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (vs. 17) Propitiation is a word that only shows up four times in the Bible, but is incredibly important to understand. Here are two helpful articles to develop a stronger understanding of this vital doctrine.

1. [What is Propitiation?](https://ask.ligonier.org/podcast-episodes/what-is-propitiation)
2. [Salvation by Propitiation](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/salvation-by-propitiation/)

**January 5 – Hebrews 3**

This chapter can be simply divided into two pieces. Part one is an argument that Jesus is better than Moses. Part 2 is a warning.

Jesus is better than Moses because:

1. Jesus, not Moses, is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. – verse 1
2. Jesus is counted worthy of more glory because he built “the house.” – verse 3 (according to verse 6, every true believer in the gospel is part of ‘the house.’)
3. Moses was a household servant, but Jesus is the Master (Son, heir, owner) of the house. – verses 5-6

A warning against hard heartedness:

For further self-examination to see if you have a hard heart:

1. Are there sins in your life that you have become comfortable with?
2. Are there sins that you refuse to cut off?
3. Do you find yourself ignoring calls to repentance and commands to obey?
4. Do you love the world or things of the world more than Christ and His family?
5. Do you find yourself wallowing in constant doubt about God and His Word?

If any of these describe you, hear the words of Hebrews 3 and repent so that you will not end up like the children of Israel who were unable to enter in because of their unbelief.

**January 6 – Hebrews 4**

Yesterday we saw a very explicit argument about how Jesus is superior to Moses. Today we are going to see how Jesus is better than Joshua, although the argument is not as straight forward. The bulk of this chapter is a commentary on Psalm 95.

Jesus is Better than Joshua

What did Joshua provide for the people of Israel? He helped to usher them into the ‘rest’ of Canaan. However, there is a greater and more full rest that God was always intending to bring His people into. Not the rest of ceasing from work on the seventh day. Rather, it is that we who know Christ are able to ‘rest’ in His finished work for our salvation. This is why there is no need for us to adhere to an Old Testament form of Sabbatarian observance. As Colossians 2:17 says about the sabbath, “These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Jesus is a Better High Priest

This is the most extensive argument that the author of Hebrews is going to make. It stretches from Hebrews 4:14 all the way to the end of chapter 7. Today, we are just going to see the introduction. Let’s zoom in on three specific ways that Jesus is a better High Priest according to chapter 4.

1. He is better by nature of His origin (vs 14)

The phrase “passed through the heavens” in verse 14 is speaking to the supernatural and eternal origins of Jesus. He is the only one who was pre-existent prior to His birth.

1. He is better by nature of His sympathy (vs 14)

Jesus is not a hardened, uncaring observer of our frailty and limitations. By becoming one of us, Jesus joined us in our humanity and became capable of sympathizing with us in our weaknesses.

1. He is better by nature of His sinlessness (vs 15)

We can confidently draw near to the throne of grace because our great High Priest is completely pure and blameless. No other high priest could ever stand in perfect righteousness over the people. Jesus alone is our sinless High Priest.

For your edification: Here is a song about the high priestly work of Jesus that you probably know well, but may not have thought about in terms of its high priestly meaning. I hope it encourages your soul. [Before the Throne of God Above](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LULK2nZ6sCc)

For further study: [Should Christians Keep the Sabbath?](https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/should-christians-keep-the-sabbath)

**January 7 – Hebrews 5**

Today we continue the argument that Jesus is a better High Priest. The chapter then concludes with the third warning. Much of this chapter is drawing from Psalm 110.

Jesus is better by nature of His eternality

The argument here is actually relatively simple. Here is the logical progression:

1. Jesus promised to make His Messiah a High Priest forever (eternally). (vs. 5-6)
2. Jesus is the only person who was appointed to an eternal post (vs. 10).
3. Therefore, Jesus is the only possible High Priest. Nobody else could hold this position.

Jesus Learned Obedience

One of the most interesting statements made in this passage can be found in verse 8 when it tells us that Jesus ‘learned’ obedience. This is an important thing to get right. As God of the universe, Jesus was not lacking knowledge. Rather, this is a kind of learning that comes through experience. Before the incarnation, there was never a time when Jesus was tempted. Before being a man, there was never a time that His obedience was tested by the world or the devil. So, by becoming one of us, Jesus did learn obedience by continuing on in perfect submission to the Father through every single trial.

Warning Against Dull Hearing

I remember when my grandfather was losing his hearing. (This was mostly due to much time spent on a tractor without hearing protection.) In particular, I remember watching my grandmother trying to communicate that she wanted him to do something. On a regular basis, it was as if he completely ignored her. He tuned her out. Strangely, when she said something he liked, such as “dinner is ready,” he always seemed to hear it.

The author of Hebrews tells the people that it is hard to explain things to them because they have become “dull of hearing.” In particular, he is speaking to the fact that they have failed to read and study and seek to understand the Word of God. He tells them that they are so infantile in their understanding that they still need milk rather than spiritual meat. What is the difference between milk and meat? To put it crassly, in the biological world milk is just food that has been pre-processed for you through someone else’s body. In a similar way, the author is telling these professing Christians that they still need someone to explain to them even the simplest aspects of the faith rather than understanding it from the Word themselves.

Self-examination:

Perhaps you need ‘milk’ rather than ‘meat’ at this time in your Christian walk. There is no shame in a baby acting like a baby. If you are young in the faith, of course you are going to need a good deal of help at the outset of your walk in order to develop your understanding. However, if you have been a Christian for years and you still don’t have a growing interest in studying the Word of God, then perhaps your hearing has become dull. If that is you, call out to God and plead with Him to give you a humble heart that is hungry for the Word, and for ears that are desirous to hear truth.

**January 8 – Hebrews 6**

Once again, we arrive at a chapter that can easily be broken down into two distinct halves. Part 1 is a strong warning against apostacy. Part 2 is a reminder of God’s faithfulness to His promises.

What is apostacy or an apostate? This is what happens when someone professes faith in Christ, and may even show some signs of growth, only to later show through their words or deeds that they are not actually saved. These are people who ultimately reject the Lord.

The Warning

The command we are to hear is to move on to maturity (as we learned about yesterday). Those who fail to do so reveal that they may be wolves in sheep’s clothing. They may profess with their mouth, but not believe in their heart that Jesus Christ is Lord. The warning presented here is that if someone does turn and run from Christ, there is no other road of repentance available for them. This is by far the most challenging passage to fully grasp in the book of Hebrews and I highly recommend listening to the sermon that I will post below for more help.

The Surety of the Promise

Do you remember the words of the hymn, “How Firm a Foundation?”

What More Can He Say
Than To You He Has Said,
You Who Unto Jesus
For Refuge Have Fled?

That is drawn directly from verse 18 which says, “we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.” But what is our strong encouragement to hold fast? It is that Christ is holding fast to us. We see that clearly in the very next verse, which says, “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, **20**where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf…”

The anchor of our faith is not that we are clinging with all deliberate intensity on the Savior. Rather, it is that the Savior is holding permanently and unwaveringly onto us.

For further study: [In this sermon, Ed Moore does an excellent job of humbly and thoroughly explaining the meaning of the warning found here in Hebrews 6.](https://www.ns-bc.org/sermons/sermon/2021-04-18/mission-impossible-hebrews-61-9)

For your edification: [This song is about Christ, the anchor of our hope.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U845lmy7g9A)