Jesus is Superior to the Prophets and the Angels

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Date: 15 November 2026

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[0:00] Turn to Hebrews chapter 1. I'm going to do a quick review of where we were last time I taught in Hebrews,! An introduction to the book, and then we're going to jump into the first couple of verses! A little bit heavily.

The author wrote 13 chapters of what he calls a brief exhortation. If you remember, an exhortation is a strong word of encouragement. King James would say, provoke one another to love and good works.
Stir each other up. Exhortation is a strong form of encouragement. So he's written 13 chapters of strong encouragement. We've seen the author knows and loves these Hebrew Christians, their faith, which once stood strong against persecution, the seizure of their property, but their faith is no longer producing what it produced at first.
And it seems they're struggling, and they're struggling in some very big ways. What we would expect to see is signs of life in Christ.
The author is very concerned he's not seeing. We talk about signs of life in Christ. What are signs of life in Christ? What does that even mean?
[1:13] That's a question I'm throwing out to you. We will talk back and forth during this time. What are signs of life in Christ? That's not a biblical term. But we should know what that is, right?

Fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness. Those things being grown and moved into us in more glorious ways. Thanks. What else? Signs of life in Christ.
Love of the brethren. Love of the brethren. You love the church. Do you love the church? Do you love God's people? Not just this church, the church. When we travel, we love going to other churches and joining with other believers.
What else? Signs of life in Christ. Repentance. You're learning to hate sin. You're learning to mortify and kill the sin in your life.
And you're doing that increasingly. Popcorn. What else? Loving Christ and hating, excuse me, loving truth and hating that.
[2:18] Yeah. A love for the truth. God's word is truth. Jesus is truth. I am the way, the truth, and the life. So loving God's word. Loving the things that our Lord has taught us. I wrote down several things here just as I thought.

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness. You guys covered several of them. Being transformed. Being transformed. Are you being transformed? Are you changing?
Can you look back five years and say, I'm being changed? There's a glorious work going on in me. How about self-sacrificing? How about self-sacrificing? Your love for self is going down.
And your love for others and sacrificial giving to others is going up. Redeeming the time. Redeeming the time. How are you at redeeming the time?
Making the most of every opportunity, as scripture would say. Believing God and having faith. 2 Corinthians 13.5. The apostle Paul tells us, those who profess Christ are to examine yourselves.
[3:22] To see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves? That Jesus Christ is in you.

Unless indeed. You fail to meet the test. Failing to meet the test. That we're called to.
The author's concern for these Hebrew Christians. There's no greater concern you can have than that somebody is failing to meet the test. That they're alive in Christ. They're not showing that fruit. That's what the author is concerned about. That's why he wrote 13 chapters of strong exhortation. That means some of the things I say are going to come across as, wow. Because he's very, very concerned.

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For these Hebrew Christians. Paul's writing about the most important test you'll ever take. Is Jesus in you? Christ in you is what? The hope of glory.
[4:24] I'm glad I heard that from a couple of different directions. Christ in you is the hope of glory. To not have that hope. Is the greatest concern we can have for you. The Hebrew Christians seem to be on the edge of failing the test.

They seem to be. Their lives and routines are revealing some bad fruit. They're shrinking back from Jesus.
And they're looking back to the Old Testament things that they've loved. And they're wanting to go back. To leave Jesus and go back to the old. We can't go back.
Not even in the early part of the New Testament period. The Egyptians were set free from Israel. Or from the Israelites were set free from Egypt. By God's strong arm.
And what did they want to do shortly after they were out of Egypt? Go back to their slavery. We want to go back to Egypt. We don't want to be out here.
[5:20] There's trials out here. We want to go back to where we're more comfortable. That's not a direction we ever want to go. Is back. The gospel and the redemptive message is moving forward.

We're to move forward with it. Forward into Christ. Pressing into Christ. They're shrinking back. Remember the Hebrew Christians started off so well. In Christ they persevered.
And perseverance is essential. Let me say that again. Perseverance is essential. It's not starting good. And then withering. Persevering.
Pressing into it. It seems they've been going through some very weary and compromising times. They're losing their confidence. And they're under a lot of stress and pressure.
They're being persecuted. It's not going to be persecuted. Pastor Jeremy talked to us about David and Saul. One of the things he said was. Pressure has a way of revealing. What we really trust.
[6:19] What you really trust. Comes out when you're under pressure. Hebrew Christians are shrinking back. And they seem ready to turn away from Jesus. Let's look at their situation. I want to look at just several things.

About them. That they're going through. That may cause them. And think about us. Do we go through these kind of things? So one is personal doubts. You ever wonder when you hear stories about people suffering.
Like I think his name is Peter. One of our missionaries in another country. Who has an orphanage. There's lots of kids. And the compound got raided. And kids were stolen. And he was beat up and knocked out.
Fighting. And he taught the kids to fight. And then. The city. The government. Tells them all the kids that remain. Need to come to their schools. And not be schooled there.
And he keeps the youngest ones back. And then he goes to the city government. And tells them. I've kept them back. I can't. That's hard for me to imagine.
[7:21] God graciously moved there. And praise God. For the way he did move. But that's. That's pressure. And I wonder when I hear that. What would I do? Pray to God.

That you have strength. Here. Let's say. Go get me. Here.
Here. près■ sindiown. Here. Here. Here. Here. près como Schattie. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. been persecuted and killed and they're associating themselves with him, they're being persecuted. They can't turn for Bible. In fact, this letter that just showed up, it's going to become part of the New Testament. They don't know that. They got a letter from somebody that loves them. But there is no New Testament to turn to. We can turn to so many chapters and verses that tell us great and precious promises. That's still in the process. God is still teaching the apostles. So at this time, even Paul and Peter, they're struggling, right?
Paul is probably excelling more. Peter denies the Lord three times, is restored. God blunts a sheet down from heaven. What's on the sheet? Say it louder than that. Animals, unclean animals. And what does he tell Peter to do?
[8:42] Kill and eat. And what does Peter say? This is the Lord in glory talking to Peter in the book of Acts.

He says, I've never eaten anything unclean. I'm not going to eat that. Three times again, God is trying to tell him, there's nothing. Don't declare unclean what I've declared clean. It's not what goes

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into you that defiles you. It's what comes out of you.
They're still learning. Peter and Paul are eating with the Gentiles and the men from Israel come. And Peter pulls himself back. He doesn't want to be seen eating with the Gentiles.
And Paul reproves him. So he's vacillating back and forth. There's all kinds of lessons still being learned in the New Testament. How do Gentiles fit in with the Jews?
Why are all these Jewish institutions going away? They're struggling. And they don't have a book to open and turn to. It's being written to the churches to address these issues.
[9:46] The author is very sensitive to the Hebrew Christians. He doesn't want to offend his Jewish readers by putting down the Jewish institutions. What he wants to do is lift Jesus so much higher up than they are that you just realize we can't look back to you here.

This is so glorious and so good. And this is shadows and types. So the author is trying to move them in that direction.
He begins the introduction. He begins the book with no introduction. He dives straight into the deep end theologically. So we're going to do that now. Turn to Hebrews chapter 1.
You probably already did. I ask you to go a little bit though. Hebrews chapter 1. We're going to start with verses 1 and 2. I'm going to spend most of our time there and then 3 and 4 and we may read the rest of the chapter. But we're going to stay right here in the front part.
After I read this, I'm going to ask you a question. I'm going to ask, why did the author start with these two verses? So as I read them to you, you'll be thinking, why here?
[10:51] What would be the reason for starting this 13 chapter book over 300 verses with these two verses? He begins, Why start here?

No hi, no greetings. Straight into what? What does he start off with? I guess we should say that first. What does he start off with?
God speaking to him. Revelation. He starts off with revelation. God has been speaking to us. That's incredibly significant. How do we know anything about God?
How do we know anything about God? That's right. That's the only way we know anything about God. Is he chooses to reveal it.
Deuteronomy 29.29 says, The secret things belong to the Lord, our God. But things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.
[12:24] God has revealed some things. But he has not revealed all things. Jesus said, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Revelation from God is so important that we live by that. That's what we're called to, is to live by that. Hebrews 1 opens, contrasting how God chooses to reveal himself.
God decides what will be revealed about him. And who will be doing the revealing. That's his call. God is truth.
And it is in his grace towards us that he reveals any of his great truths. Anything to us of God's revelation of himself. It should be the most important thing we have.
There should be nothing of higher value to us than what our creator God has revealed to us. The thing we value most above all other things.
[13:24] J.I. Packer, in his book, Knowing God, says this, For what higher, more exalted, and more compelling goal can there be than for you and I to know God?

He goes on in chapter 3 to ask five questions. I want you to hear how vast and wide these questions are about knowing God. There are several here that are going through this study with me. I'll just ask at the end of it. What were we made for? Somebody. Glorify God. That would be part of, if I ask you, what is the chief end of man?
What are we made for? Worship. We are made for that. We are made to glorify God. What's J.I. Packer say in this book, Knowing God?
We are made to know God. Before we can glorify God, we need to know God. We need to know what he's revealed and honor that. Second question.
[14:35] What aim should we have and should we set for ourselves in this life? To know God. Get a theme here.

What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? To know God. John 17.3. This is eternal life that they know me or that they know you and that they know me.
That is eternal life. Knowing God. Four. What is the best thing in life? Bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else. Unbelievable.

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What's going to bring you the most contentment, joy, satisfaction, peace in this life is knowing God. Five.
What of all states that God ever sees man in gives God the most pleasure? It's in our knowledge of him. Hosea 6.6.
[15:36] I desired the knowledge of God more than of burnt offerings and sacrifices. Five pretty all-encompassing questions. You can lump some other things in there with it maybe, but knowing God is certainly the answer to each of those questions.

Does your use of time show that knowing God, time in God's word, time under the teaching of God's word is a priority, is a value, is the best thing you could do in all these categories?
Your use of time. Or does it look more like Keith Green's words from the 1970s? He sings in a song, you prefer the light of your TV. You love the world and you're avoiding me.
That's a hard call from Keith Green back then. Entertainment was becoming bigger and bigger. In the 80s, Neil Postman writes his book, 1985, Amusing Ourselves to Death.
He was concerned that entertainment would become what we delight in, what we get consumed with, what becomes the big taker of our time. Amusing Ourselves to Death.
[16:49] There is evidence. The Hebrews both believe and understand that God spoke through the prophets. This is a place where, getting back to Revelation, this is a place that the writer and the Hebrew Christians have some commonality.

They both believe that God was speaking through the Old Testament, through the prophets. That's a great thing to have in common. We believe what the prophets said is God's word. So he starts by saying that in verse 1, that God spoke through the prophets long ago in diverse ways, in sundry times, as Pastor Colin taught, sometimes a hand writing on a wall God speaks through.
And it takes a special interpreter, but God spoke in all kinds of different ways. but their understanding evidences some deficiencies when it comes to what they understand about Christ's revelation, what Jesus reveals, what it means that Jesus is God's son.
So verses 1 and 2 start by contrasting between the ways of God has chosen to reveal himself and their, because he's chosen to reveal himself in prophets and in his son.
Those are the ways. So we're going to contrast those. We are. The Hebrew author is. Contrast those two ways. And the first contrast is between the era.
[18:14] It was long ago. And now it's in these last days. Time frame is being contrasted. The second contrast is who the revelations were directed to.

They were directed to our fathers. Now, in these last days, they've been directed to us. And the third contrast, which is where we'll spend some time, the agents who are speaking for God, the prophets and his son.
So let's reflect briefly on the prophets, then on his son. Get some information on those. The prophets were God's spokesperson to his people. In Exodus 19, Israel did not want God to talk to them as a nation.
Why? Why didn't he want God talking to them as a nation? Exodus 19, they're gathered at the foot of the mountain. They were afraid.
Rightfully so. I think we'd all be afraid. We're afraid when we see angels fall down and don't know what to do. God come to the mountain and they were afraid. And what did they say? We don't want you to talk to us.
[19:26] We want you to talk to Moses and have Moses talk to us and we'll do what you say. So God establishes that prophetic with Moses and then with many other prophets that will follow Moses.

That they're going to be the spokesperson for God to the nation. First Peter chapter, or second Peter chapter 1 verses 20 and 21.
God speaks of all the prophecy that ever comes from God and from his Holy Spirit. And he says this, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.
For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
That's how all prophecy came. Did you ever wonder what God's view of the prophets are? As he looks back down the corridors of history, what does he think of the prophets and his people's responses to the prophets?

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[20:31] In Jeremiah 27, 25, and 26, he says this about that. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, 820 years.

For the last 820 years, I have persistently sent all my servants, the prophets, to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but they stiffened their neck.
They did worse than their fathers. I sent all my servants and they did not listen to me. Notice it's God who's talking.
He says they did worse. Luke 11, 15, 51. So the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world may be charged against this generation from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.
Scripture says from the blood of Abel, the very first person martyred and killed, to the blood of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles. He's the last person mentioned. In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles was the last book.
[21:45] So he's the last prophet mentioned killed. He says, from the blood of them to the last book, the Hebrew, God has spoke long ago and God sends his prophets to a stiff-necked and murderous people.

That's what God says in his word about what's happened. People, why did God not send his prophets to his people?
What's the reason? To warn them, to correct them, to reveal himself.
He sends the prophets because he wants to reveal something about himself. Warnings to us. Yeah. He sends his prophets to his people to reveal himself.
God is trying to reveal himself. How did the stiff-necked, rebellious people respond to God's sending of his prophets? That's right.
[22:48] They killed them. So in verse 2, how does God respond to their brutality? Who does he send? Yeah.

Is that amazing? He responds to the brutality of his prophets by sending his son as a prophet. In these last days, he sent his son.
After all the prophets, he sent his son. We should be saying like John says, oh, what manner of love is this? What manner of love is this? He's still trying to reveal himself.
And this time, he's going to do it in his son. Let's look at the son, the superiority of Jesus over all the other prophets. That's what's being said here.
A few days after Jesus is crucified, he's resurrected, and he's walking on the road to Emmaus. He sees two of his disciples walking. They're downcast. He comes up beside them.
[23:54] He says, what are you discussing? And they say, are you the only one in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's going on these days? Their heads were down. They're downcast.

What does Jesus tell them? You can paraphrase. What does Jesus say to them? Yeah, it says he unfolded all the scriptures to them.
all of the prophets and showed how this suffering servant had to suffer and die and be resurrected.
And their response, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us?
And then as he breaks the bread and they see his hands, they realize who they're talking to. It's God revealing himself again, resurrected from the dead and great joy.
Did not our hearts burn within us? Luke 24 says, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted them, all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.
[25:05] What a road that would have been to be on, right? While the people are being persecuted and killed by God's people, or while the prophets are being persecuted and killed by God's people, they are revealing for God, the things concerning Jesus.

I want you to get here. What he says is, the prophets were talking about who? Me.
All of history has been pointing to me. That's what those disciples heard on the road to Emmaus. Jesus told them, it all is about me. what I must go through, what I must suffer, that I must die, that I would be resurrected again to life, and that I'm your hope.
Everything from the Old Testament points to him. How can you turn back to them when they all point to him? You can't turn back to them. He's the hope.
They longed for Jesus and his day. Why? Because Jesus is God.
[26:13] God revealing himself. That's what's happening when Hebrews 1 says, God is speaking, or Jesus is revealing God. What it means is, God is revealing God.

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When Jesus is born, the angels were praising, and God's shepherds heard all this. Baby Jesus is not the start, not just the start of something new.
He is the start of something new. But he's also the conclusion of everything that's gone before. He's the major axis on which huge change is happening. And that's why their temple's going away.
That's why the priesthood's going away. That's why all these changes are coming, because Jesus is that point. He's the anointed one. He's the one that's going to deliver them, and us.
He's the fulfillment of all the prophecies that came before. He's actually who they've been longing for. Does that sometimes just boggle your mind?
[27:15] They're longing for him, and he's right there, and they don't see him. I wonder how much that happens in our lives. Jesus is not just a prophet. He's God revealing God.

That means he's different than the prophets in some very critical ways. It's not just his words at a moment in time that is God revealing God.
It's everything he says. It's everything he does. It's every look he gives. When the woman's caught in adultery, and he says, who condemns you?
Neither do I condemn you. That is God talking to a woman caught in the very act of adultery. To the woman at Samaria, he starts talking to her, and he says, go get your husband and bring him.
And she says, I don't have a husband. And he says, what you say is true. You've had five, and the guy you're with now isn't your husband. And then he tells her who he is.
[28:23] And she gets saved, and she goes to become an evangelist to Samaria. And lots of people come out and believe in Jesus, and he stays two extra days there. That's God talking to somebody who's been married five times and is with somebody that's not any of their former spouses.

We need to see God like that. His words of grace and mercy and hope. They should melt our hearts.
This is why the Hebrew Christians cannot go back to the shadows and pipes of the Old Testament that won't do a thing for them other than point to Jesus. God reveals himself as the lover of our souls.
1980s, early 80s, I was stationed at Naval Air Station in Point Magoo, California, and Ronald Reagan came through a lot because he liked to go to Santa Barbara to a ranch.
One night, we had to be up late. We'd take the ambulances out and sit on the runway and drive back. But it's important for us to make a showing. So I'm preparing a study.
[29:30] I don't know if I'm preparing to teach or in my quiet time, but I'm sitting and writing with the Bible open, and I hear in the background the TV say that we have met our Creator and He is our enemy.

And that sent me off in thought for 15 minutes just thinking, that is what we deserve. We've been in a position of war against God for a long time.
That is what we deserve. But that is not what we get. In Hebrews, God reveals himself through Jesus. In the book we're going through, grant it slowly, God reveals himself not as our enemy, but as our brother who sympathizes with our weaknesses.
As one who has been tempted in every way like we are, yet was without sin. Jesus is the King of Kings, and he's on his throne in the book of Hebrews, and it's a throne of grace and mercy so that we can find help in our time of need.
Jesus is leading many sons to glory. We'll look at that next week. The author and perfecter of our faith. He created and upholds the cosmos.
[30:46] He has made purification for our sins. That's how he can say, I don't condemn you either. Jesus has redeemed us. And he's seated on God's throne right now, interceding on our behalf.

That's all in the book of Hebrews. We need to have our hope and faith and trust in this Jesus. Jesus is more than a prophet. He's the Son of God, came down to reveal God to us.
And we should look at everything he does as that. Jesus is more than a prophet. He is God's Son. His words are always God's words. Everything about Jesus reveals God.
His person, his work, his love, his grace, his mercy, when he's upset against hypocrisy. That should talk to us about any hypocrisy we have where we're just not being real.
We are not at the end of the greatest story ever told when baby Jesus arrives in that manger. We are not to shrink back from the former things.

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[31:51] We are to move forward into those things. I'm going to read real quick Hebrews chapter 1, the following verses so that we hear what God says throughout.

If you're there, you can go look with me. long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.
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.
He, Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. I love that. Exactly the nature of God in everything we see.
He is the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purifications for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.
[32:56] And having become as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. I'm going to compare Jesus to the angels here.

I don't think we have a great big struggle with the angels being superior to Jesus. But in the Hebrew days, they were used to angels doing some pretty amazing things amongst them.
Kill 120,000 people in one day, one angel. There are just things that happen that they had, the old covenant was mediated by Moses and angels.
Angels held a high place in there. So the writer continues, For to which of the angels did God ever say, You are my son? Today I have begotten you.
Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. Now he's talking about angels here, not Jesus. He does say this is Jesus. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him.
[33:57] Of the angels, he says, he makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire. But of the sun, he says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Oh, that we would be more like that.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.
And you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain.
You, they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe. you will roll them up. Like a garment, they will be changed.
[34:58] But you are the same and your years will have no end. And to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?

Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Are they all not ministering servants sent to serve us, those in the church, those who are going to inherit salvation?
There is no going back from Jesus. We're to move forward. All things are to keep moving forward. That's the way redemptive history works. It starts, when does redemptive history start?
Great answer. Before the foundation of the world, you were chosen in Christ. The redemption had started. You were chosen.
And that means it will surely happen. You're chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. And then we go through the problem with sin, right? We get cursed.
[36:07] And then God promises in that curse that the seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head. And that promise gets further and further developed as we go through redemptive history.

We learn that it will be David's son. We learn all kinds of things. 800 plus prophecies about this Messiah who's coming, this anointed one. And then he comes.
And in the very beginning of the New Testament period, you still can't go back. 30 years in, no more than 35 years in at this point in time, you still can't go backwards.
Redemptive history moves forward. When Jesus was born in the manger, he started something new and did away, fulfilled the old. Actually, at the end of his life, he fulfilled it.
So that now is where we are. But that's not the end. What are we to be? Are we to be those who are shrinking back? What are we to be?
[37:13] The church who meets on Sundays? Some answer? Who are we to be?

Overcoming children of God who are indwelt with his Holy Spirit. His all-surpassing greatness is within us. So we can mortify sin. So we can love each other.

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So we can serve each other. So we can share the good news of Christ. So others can have hope, joy, peace, patience. All the things that we shouldn't be enjoying. We're to be the kingdom that advances, that the gates of hell cannot stand against.
And it's real easy to forget. That's what we're to be. We're to be overcomers. Revelation. Revelation. Seven churches. To him that overcomes, I will give the right to do something different to each church.
It's overcoming. That's why we need to encourage each other. That's why the Hebrews got a 13-chapter letter with over 300 verses because he's concerned that they may not be showing the signs of life they need to.
[38:22] And they're going back to something that has no life at all. They need encouragement daily according to the book of Hebrews. We need encouragement daily.

The world presses us. Our own flesh presses us. We get tired and frustration show. We need to be some very apologetic people.
Some very real people. Jesus came that we would be overcomers. So let's encourage each other to that. Next week we'll look at Hebrews chapter 2 and we're dismissed.
Thanks. Thanks.
Thanks. Thanks.
[39:17] Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks.

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