

Lesson 8 | October 23, 2022

God the Son

Study Text: Hebrews 1:1 through 2:4

Central Truth: Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God.

Key Verse: Hebrews 1:8

Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom (KJV).

To the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice” (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students should have a clear understanding of Christ as **the sole Source of salvation and everlasting life**.
- Students should be prepared to recognize and reject things that tempt them to trust in something or someone other than Christ.
- Students should be wary of the danger of neglecting the message of the gospel and recognize reasons why such neglect might take place.

Introducing the Study

Say: The Epistle to the Hebrews is foremost a Book about Jesus Christ: **who He is, what He has done, and why it is important to fully grasp what the Bible says about what He has done**. Such understanding begins with the first words of this Epistle and builds throughout its pages

Opening Activity—Who Is Jesus?

Ask. *If you were asked to describe who Jesus Christ is to you personally, what would you say?* As students respond, encourage them to think beyond what He has done for them to also focus on His identity as the Son of God, including why that is important.

Say: **We find great value in proclaiming Jesus as our Savior and describing our personal relationship with Him. We might quote His teachings when explaining how He has changed our lives. But the Book of Hebrews goes to great lengths to explain that understanding Jesus’ eternal divine characteristics is necessary for us to understand who He is and what He has accomplished. This week’s study begins an in-depth look at who Jesus Christ is and what He has done on our behalf.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Resource Packet Item 1: Introduction to Hebrews

Distribute the information sheet. Discuss its content as an introduction to the unit as well as the lesson.

It is important to recognize that Hebrews was originally written to Jewish Christians struggling with discouragement and persecution. This sets the stage for the Book's in-depth explanation of Christ as divine Creator, promised Messiah, and fulfillment of the Law.

Paul gave a trustworthy saying. If we die with him, we will also live with him. If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.

NLT: Psalm 93: 1 The Lord is king! He is robed in majesty. Indeed, the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength. The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.

2 Your throne, O Lord, has stood from time immemorial. You yourself are from the everlasting past.

Part 1—A More Excellent Name From the Beginning, God Spoke

Hebrews 1:1

[Heb 1:1 NIV] 1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

[Heb 1:1 NKJV] 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

[Heb 1:1 NLT] 1 Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.

[Heb 1:1 LSB] 1 God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

Say: Perhaps more than any other New Testament Book, Hebrews calls us to examine the teachings of the Old Testament, particularly the Law. As Hebrews opens, God's people are reminded that His communication with them began in creation, and He has spoken to His people continually from the beginning. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 1:1 opens with the proclamation, "God spoke" (1:1, NLT), a good reminder that Hebrews is filled with references to the activity of God on behalf of and among His people. Indeed, the word "God" appears in Hebrews more often than nearly any other New Testament Book. For a congregation of Jewish Christians facing struggles and persecution, they needed a reminder that God

was with them, just as He had been with His people from the beginning—speaking to them and interacting with them.

Resource Packet Item 2: Many Times and in Many Ways

Distribute the information sheet and review its content. Discuss the various ways God spoke to His people as well as the contents of His messages. Talk about how God might speak similar messages to us today. Ask students why it is important to recognize that God speaks to His people. What does that tell us about God, as well as about the way He views us?

In the Old Testament, God spoke to “ancestors” and “prophets” at “many times and in many ways” (verse 1, NLT). Take a moment to reflect on the variety of ways God spoke throughout the Old Testament. **He spoke to Moses in a burning bush (Exodus 3:1–3). He spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12–13). He spoke to Isaiah through a dramatic vision (Isaiah 6:1–8). And He spoke to Hosea through difficult family circumstances (Hosea 1:1–11). God’s message arrived in visions and dreams, through symbols and forces of nature. Clearly, God had a close relationship with His people from the very beginning, encouraging and exhorting, loving and chastening them. As the message of Hebrews unfolds, the reader learns that this intimate, heartfelt communication builds toward and culminates in the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Discuss

? Think about the different ways God spoke in the Old Testament. Why might He have used such variety from one circumstance to the next?

? How does God speak to His people today, and how can we know that He is speaking to us??

God Speaks Through His Son

Hebrews 1:2–4

[Heb 1:2-4 NKJV] 2 has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Say: Although God spoke frequently throughout the centuries of Old Testament history, the consummate revelation of His Word to us is found in Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 1:2–4, we see the basis of this great revelation: Jesus is divine Creator, radiating the glory and character of the Father. The hopes and promises of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in Him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The “last days” (KJV) or “final days” (NLT) mentioned in Hebrews 1:2 refers to the Messianic Age—the time between Christ’s first coming and His soon return. Such a time is unique in that the Messiah has come, yet must be understood in light of the teachings that have preceded His coming. Within verses 2–4, then, the writer of Hebrews creates both a connection to and a distinction from the message of God in the Old Testament. In the past, God had shared His message with His people through prophets and patriarchs. But Jesus brought the fullness of God’s revelation— something that was only foreseen in the Old Testament.

Jesus’ designation as “heir of all things” (verse 2, KJV) identifies Him as being fully God (note the similarities between this passage and John 1:1–4). And so, in becoming a man, Jesus did not surrender His divine nature and character in any way. Rather, He limited himself within a human body, as seen in the fact that His glorified post-Resurrection body is described as “being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (verse 3, KJV). Simply put, verse 3 declares that Jesus is Creator God, and He upholds creation by His power.

At first glance, one might wonder how these opening verses relate to the remainder of the Book, which describes Jesus as the Great High Priest and ultimate sacrifice for our sins. These things seem to point toward His earthly ministry, not toward creation. However, verses 2–4 are critical to understanding this Epistle— and, likewise, understanding the ministry of Christ. The Book of Hebrews asserts and affirms the absolute supremacy of the eternal Christ over all created things. More specifically, this is especially true with regard to salvation. It is human nature for people to focus on other things as they contemplate their spiritual needs. They tend to look at their behavior, their willingness to do things or abstain from things. They might even be tempted to look to other forces to bring about their salvation.

For the Christians of the first century, angels posed this kind of temptation. Angels had held a prominent place in Israel’s history, assisting them in deliverance from enemies and dangers, and even providing messages and direction from the Lord (cf. Genesis 16:8–9; 19:1–12; Judges 2:1–4; 2 Samuel 24:16–17; Isaiah 37:36; Daniel 6:22). As a result, in New Testament times, God’s people faced a temptation to worship them. In doing so, they were worshiping the creation instead of the Creator. That is, they were placing their hope or trust in something that had been created rather than the One who had created them. The answer to overcoming such temptation was to recognize Christ’s superiority over angels, and indeed over all of creation.

Discuss

? How are Christians today tempted to place their hope or trust in creation instead of the Creator?

? How has Jesus spoken to us in “these final days,” and what are some ways we can prepare to better understand His message to us?

Part 2—Lord of Creation

Jesus Is Greater Than Created Beings

Hebrews 1:5–9

[Heb 1:5-9 NKJV] 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." 7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." 8 But to the Son [He says]: "Your throne, O God, [is] forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

Say: The first chapter of Hebrews is devoted to establishing Jesus as greater than creation. So, we might ask, “Why is so much emphasis placed upon this?” In response, it’s wise spend some time thinking about the most common challenges we face as Christians. Often they are rooted in a desire to rely on things we can see, possess, or control. Sometimes these things even take the form of self-reliance. We need to be reminded that we are created beings, not the Creator. Believing ourselves to be more than this has been a danger since the temptation in Eden. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 1:5–9 expands upon what was stated in verse 4, giving specific reasons as to why Jesus is different from angels. Verse 5 is important because of the phrase, “For unto which of the angels said he at any time . . . he shall be to me a son” (KJV). **In the Old Testament the term “sons of God” was sometimes applied to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1, see both KJV and NLT, noting that “sons of God” is the literal translation). Likewise, the phrase was applied to Israel (Exodus 4:22) and even to Solomon (2 Samuel 7:14). Yet no angel, nor any person or any other created being, was ever singled out and given the status described in Hebrews 1:5–9. Only Jesus would, and could, hold the position described in Hebrews. This unique relationship between Father and Son—existing within the Trinity—existed in eternity past and**

will exist in eternity future. Jesus alone possesses unsurpassed greatness as the Son of the living God.

Furthermore, Jesus is the rightful object of worship from angels (verse 6). Interestingly, this verse cites Deuteronomy 32:43 (see NLT)—the culmination of a passage declaring the supremacy of God over all false gods and enemies of Israel. This ties Jesus to the worship of God in the Old Testament and sets Him apart as worthy of all of heaven's worship. Hebrews 1:7–9 continues the contrast between Jesus and angels by likening God's angelic messengers to wind and fire, which are earthy forces. **Yet note the royal imagery describing Jesus: throne, scepter, rule, kingdom. He sits upon the divine throne, and He possesses divine attributes such as love for justice and hatred for evil. He alone is the "anointed" One. The term anoint refers to a rite of consecration for a sacred purpose (see Exodus 28:41; 1 Samuel 10:1; 1 Kings 19:16). Jesus is the anointed Messiah and Son of God. Nothing compares to Him.**

At this point in the study, a modern Christian might question the purpose and meaning behind all of these details. Once again, it is important to remember the issues faced by those first readers of Hebrews. **Coming out of Judaism, and into belief in Christ, they found themselves faced with serious challenges. They needed to reaffirm their trust in their newfound Savior. Likewise, we do well to renew our trust in our incomparable Savior above any other temptation or distraction.**

Discuss

? What can the Old Testament teach us about Jesus?

? What are some misguided sources of help people (even Christians) turn to in times of trouble, and why do they turn to these things??

Creation Will Pass Away; Jesus Is Forever

Hebrews 1:10–14

[Heb 1:10-14 NKJV] 10 And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Say: Often when we face difficult trials, we struggle to find a way of escape or even hope for relief. Life's challenges can seem insurmountable. The great joy of the

Christian life is knowing that in Christ we have hope that will last forever, long after the world we know has passed away (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 1:10 continues to contrast the eternal Savior with the temporal world. When the foundations of the world were laid (i.e., the world began), Jesus was already present. Likewise, although heaven and earth will pass away, Jesus will remain forever (verses 11–12). Note the reference to clothing, things that are a constant in our lives but will surely become old, tattered, and worn as they are used. Even Deuteronomy 29:5 highlights this, noting that it was a miracle the clothing of the Israelites did not wear out after forty years. But Jesus will be there at the “wearing out” of the world just as He was there at the laying of its foundation (Hebrews 1:12). Jesus’ divine status is cemented in verse 13, which places Him at the right hand of the Father, unlike angels, who stand before God in His presence (see Luke 1:19; Revelation 8:2). In fact, God himself engages in the task of service by making the enemies of God into a footstool under the feet of Christ.

The treatment of enemies in Hebrews 1:13–14 carries the imagery of warfare in Bible times. Conquerors would place their feet on the necks of those being conquered, as a symbol of triumph and superiority.

Such words about Jesus would have brought comfort to Jewish believers suffering under the sting of persecution. Jesus, their Savior, is seated at the right hand of the Father. No enemy of His people could possibly emerge victorious over them in the end. He is Creator God, sovereign over all other powers and forces. All enemies will ultimately occupy a place of dishonor and defeat under His authority.

Discuss

? What things do people tend to cling to even though they will pass away?

? How is your life impacted by recalling that your Savior is eternal?

Part 3—Wondrous Savior Don’t Drift Away From the Truth

Hebrews 2:1

[Heb 2:1 NKJV] 1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Many have drifted away. Just think of those in our church that still live in this area yet no longer attend any church in the area.

Say: If you've ever owned a boat, you know that it is easy for it to drift away from the launch point without your even realizing it. If one simply fails to make its mooring secure, currents will take it away from the dock. Such a scene is a kind of picture of the warning in Hebrews 2:1, as God's people had begun to "drift away" (NLT) from the gospel of Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 2:1 cuts to the heart of the matter discussed in chapter 1. Since Christ is superior to the prophets (God's spokesmen who deserved earnest attention), and the angels (whom the Jews so admired, sometimes to the point of worship), believers are to "listen very carefully to the truth" (Hebrews 2:1, NLT). The original readers of this Epistle needed to exercise great caution in their faith, as some were even contemplating a return to Judaism (as will be seen in future lessons). Danger lay ahead if they moved away from their relationship with Jesus. They had allowed the struggles of the faith to divert their attention from truth.

The latter part of verse 1 highlights the danger of inattention to the truth of Christ. Those who failed to "listen very carefully" to the gospel (i.e., respond to and obey its teachings) faced the danger of drifting away from the security it provided. That original audience of this Epistle had not deserted the gospel. They were simply considering doing so. And so, **the writer clearly saw this danger, and warned them in no uncertain terms. As their minds wandered toward teachings that contradicted the gospel, they faced the grave danger of moving away from the security they enjoyed in Jesus Christ.**

This powerful message of Hebrews 2:1 still applies today. **We see indifference to the claims of Christ, ignorance of His good news, interest in religious teachings that run counter to Scripture—all on today's religious landscape. But those who find themselves caught up in these things must recognize the danger of rejecting salvation through Christ. His gospel alone presents the good news of salvation. He is the only hope for everlasting life, and so His gospel deserves careful attention.**

Resource Packet Item 3: Danger Ahead!

Distribute the work sheet, noting that the Scriptures given describe dangers believers face when they drift from the gospel. Have students complete the sheet, then discuss their results.

Discuss

? Why is attentiveness to the truth of Christ so important?

? What are some common false teachings or ideas about Christ or religion in our world that might distract us?

Don't Ignore Salvation

Hebrews 2:2–4

[Heb 2:2-4 NKJV] 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard [Him], 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

[Heb 2:2-4 NLT] 2 For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. 3 So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak? 4 And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose.

Say: Take a moment to think about how we receive the gospel. We hear it taught, preached, and proclaimed by men and women of God. But ultimately the gospel comes through the Word itself. We know about Jesus and His message because of the Word, which makes the Word our ultimate authority for the Christian life—how we live and what we believe. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 2:2–3 offers an interesting comparison, for the original readers of Hebrews and for us. For the Jews, the message, or Word, of the Law came from God, and both Acts 7:53 and Galatians 3:19 identify the Law as coming “through angels.” And grave consequences faced any Jew who failed to obey the Law (Hebrews 2:2). If disobeying a law that came through angels was catastrophic, how serious must it be to “neglect” (verse 3, KJV; “ignore,” NLT) the salvation given by the Father himself through Christ? The gospel alone provides the means to escape the wrath of God against sin. To ignore the message of salvation through Jesus Christ poses the most serious threat imaginable. Without faith in Christ, no one can escape the everlasting penalty that awaits unbelievers.

Verses 3–4 record three things that underscore the greatness of salvation through Christ: the Lord himself proclaimed it, the apostles preached it, and God confirmed its authenticity with signs, wonders, and miraculous gifts. Like the readers originally addressed in this Epistle, believers today need to stand firm in their commitment to Christ. The warning is clear: We cannot escape “if we neglect so great salvation” (verse 3, KJV). There is no other answer for the problem of sin. The gospel alone provides the true gospel message.

Discuss

? How can we know that the gospel provides the only true message of salvation?

? What are some reasons a person might neglect salvation?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: The warnings of Hebrews 2:1–4 must not be lost on us today. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers humanity our only hope of salvation (see Acts 4:12). In the face of eternity, Christ provides security. We must not drift away from the gospel, but instead resolve to stand firm in our faith in Christ no matter the temptations or struggles that surround us.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Pray together as a class, asking God to prepare you to face temptations and struggles with a resolute trust in Him.
- Commit to a deeper study of the Word in preparation for helping others who have questions or doubts about the gospel.
- Ask God to help you recognize when friends or loved ones are struggling in the faith, so that you might offer encouragement or help.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

The Messiah's Rule.

Psalm 2:1–12

[Psa 2:1-12 NKJV] 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, [saying], 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You [are] My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give [You] The nations [for] Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth [for] Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish [in] the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed [are] all those who put their trust in Him.

Tuesday:

The Unchanging One.

Psalm 102:25–28

[Psa 102:25-28 NKJV] 25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens [are] the work of Your hands. 26 They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change

them, And they will be changed. 27 But You [are] the same, And Your years will have no end. 28 The children of Your servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before You."

Wednesday:

The Lord of Angels.
Psalm 104:1–4

[Psa 104:1-4 NKJV] 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover [Yourself] with light as [with] a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. 3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, 4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

Thursday:

The Lamb of God.
John 1:24–31

[Jhn 1:24-31 NIV] 24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

Friday:

The Preeminent One.
Colossians 1:15–18

[Col 1:15-18 NIV] 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Saturday:

The Word of Life.
1 John 1:1–4

[1Jo 1:1-4 NIV] 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.