

JESUS IS BETTER

HEBREWS 1:1–4

English Standard Version (ESV)

*1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 **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. 3 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, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*

FOUNDATIONAL BIBLE PASSAGES FOR CHRISTIANS

- Every Christian needs to know foundational passages of Scripture.
- One day, you may need to recall to your heart and mind some important truths to endure great trials.
- *Key Question: Will you seek God's voice apart from Jesus? Or will Jesus be enough for you?*

Genesis 1–3	CREATION, MALE/FEMALE, The FALL
Exodus 20	The TEN COMMANDMENTS
Psalms	Psalms 1–2, 8, 16, 19, 22, 23, 42, 51, 56, 72, 84, 103, 110, 119, 139
Isaiah 53	The SUFFERING SERVANT
Jeremiah 31:31–34	The PROMISE of the NEW COVENANT
Matthew 28:18–20	The GREAT COMMISSION
John 1:1–14	The WORD of GOD MADE FLESH
John 13–17	The 'UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE' -- The night before the CRUCIFIXION
Romans 6–8	Free from SIN, Alive to Christ, Living by the Spirit, Love by God.
1 Corinthians 15	The GOSPEL and the RESURRECTION
Galatians 5	Living by the SPIRIT
Ephesians 2:1–10	Dead in SIN, made ALIVE by God through GRACE by FAITH
Philippians 2:1–11	The MINDSET we have in CHRIST
Colossians 1:15–20	The PREEMINENCE of CHRIST
1 John 4	The LOVE of GOD shown in CHRIST

THE EPISTLE of HEBREWS -- BACKGROUND

- Hebrews is a sermon/letter written as a 'Word of Exhortation' – Hebrews 13:22
- Written by 'God only knows certainly' -- expressed by Origen in the 3rd Century
- Written to Jewish Christians living in Italy (13:24)
 - These Christians are exhorted to pay attention to the gospel in order not to drift (2:1)
 - In Hebrews 3:12–14, they're challenged to "take care" and "hold fast" to Christ.
 - In Hebrews 5:11–12, they're rebuked for having become "dull of hearing;" They should be teachers, but they need the "basic principles."
 - They had suffered the seizure of property for being Christians (10:32–34)
 - Some were avoiding outsiders; some were forsaking the church (10:19–25).
 - Standing with the LORD Jesus could mean imprisonment (13:23) and eventual martyrdom (12:4; cf. 11:35–38).
 - In Hebrews 12:12–13, they're encouraged to "*lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*"
 - In the final exhortation, Hebrews 13:13–14, the writer challenges the readers to "bear the reproach [Christ] endured."

What will God say to these believers to help them endure? JESUS IS BETTER!

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1) Notice that God spoke long ago -- ‘at many times and in many ways’ vs 1

- God appeared to Abram and Jacob in human form (Genesis 18:1–2; 32:24–30).
- God sent Joseph dreams and interpretations (Genesis 40:8).
- God spoke to Moses at Sinai in thunder, lightning, and the voice of a trumpet (Exodus 19:16–19).
- God used a donkey to speak prophecies (Numbers 21–24).
- God whispered to Elijah at Horeb in a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11–13).
- God informed Ezekiel through visions (Ezekiel 1:1; 8:1–3).
- Ezekiel performed bizarre symbolic acts to communicate God's message (Ezekiel 4:1–17; 5:1–4).
- God spoke to Daniel through dreams (Daniel 2:19; 7:1).
- Amos gave direct oracles from God (Amos 1:3–2:16).
- Haggai preached sermons (Haggai 1:1-15).
- Zechariah employed mysterious signs (Zechariah 1:7-6:8).
- Malachi used questions and answers (Malachi 1:2-2:17).

The fact that God spoke in these ways demonstrates that God loves to communicate with people.

These forms of communication were revealing more about God throughout history.

Yet, as dramatic and wonderful as these forms of communication were, they were never God's final word.

2) Notice that God speaks in these last days -- ‘in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son’ vs 2

- There is a shift in history: *long ago ... in these last days*.
- There is a shift in communication: *at many times and in many ways ... but ... he has spoken to us by his Son*
- God is no longer speaking in the former ways; today he is speaking by His Son.
- God speaks through the Son to show his final revelation:
 - John 1:18: *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*
 - Colossians 1:15: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
 - 1 John 2:23: *No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.*
- God speaks through the Son to show that he is better than the Old Testament figures and systems:
 - Jesus is better than angels (1:4–14).
 - Jesus is better than Moses (3:1–6).
 - Jesus is a better priest than the OT priests (7:19).
 - The new covenant he makes is better than the old one (7:22).
 - The sacrifice he gives, the blood he sheds, is better than all the bulls and goats (9:12, 23).
 - The tent and altar he builds in heaven are better (9:11).
 - The hope he offers is better (7:19).

Why does God speak through Jesus today? Because ... JESUS IS BETTER!

3) Notice the grand theme of God, THE SON -- vs 2b-4

- He is the heir of all things – of all creation and of all redemption
Colossians 1:16: all things were created through him and for him.
- He is the creator of the world
John 1:3: All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
Romans 11:36: For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
Colossians 1:16: 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities
- He is the radiance of the glory of God
John 12:45: And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.
2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- He is the exact imprint of God's nature
Colossians 1:15: He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
John 14:8–11: 8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.
- He is the one who upholds the universe by the word of his power
Colossians 1:17: And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- He is the purifier of sins
1 John 1:7: the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
1 Peter 2:24: He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
- He is the one who sits at the right hand of Majesty on high
Psalms 110:1: The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."
Romans 8:35: 34 Who is to condemn [Christians]? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.
- He is the one who is superior to angels
Philippians 2:9-10: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.
1 Peter 3:22: who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

BECAUSE JESUS IS BETTER... ENDURE!

Pay much closer attention to [the gospel] (2:1); Hold fast [your] confidence (3:6); Take care [lest you be taken in by the deceitfulness of sin] (3:12); Do not harden your hearts (4:7); Strive to enter [God's] rest (4:11); Strive for peace . . . and for the holiness without which [we will not] see the Lord (12:14); Offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire (12:28–29); Let marriage be held in honor . . . and let the marriage bed be undefiled (13:4); Keep your life free from love of money . . . for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' (13:5); Jesus also suffered outside the gate . . . let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured (13:12–13).