

BETTER THAN

Andy Deane · 2/5/2023 · Hebrews 1-2

The author of Hebrews aims to convince his Jewish audience of one main truth: Jesus is better.

Hebrews 1:1-3, ¹ *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,* ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.* ³ *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

Jesus is BETTER THAN: Your Idols

- What an amazing description of Jesus. He is better than everything else!
- Yet we all create rival gods that we give time, thought, & resources to at the expense of all else.
- How do we discover if we have any modern idols?
 - Ask where do we spend: thoughts, emotion, resources?
 - “Your religion is what you do with your solitude.”- W.T.

Why do humans tend to create idols?

Hebrews 1:4-5, ⁴ *So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.* ⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”?*

1. We want that BRAND!

- Angels would have been popular to worship in that time.
- We'll idolize something based on its brand, or the reputation it can give to us.
- Jesus' brand is better: His name is spotless & unique
 - Heb. 1:4, ...*the name he inherited is superior...*
 - Heb. 1:5, ...*You are my Son...*

Hebrews 1:6-9, ⁶ *And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.”* ⁷ *In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.”* ⁸ *But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.* ⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companion by anointing you with the oil of joy.”*

2. We want that BENEFIT!

- We'll idolize something based on what it does for us (i.e. makes us feel good/valued).
- Jesus' benefits are better: He leads us perfectly
 - Heb. 1:6, ...*Let all God's angels worship him...* (as God)
 - Heb. 1:8, ...*justice will be the scepter of your kingdom...* (as King)

Hebrews 1:10-11, ¹⁰ *He also says, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.* ¹¹ *They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.* ¹² *You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”*

3. We want that BIGGER PURPOSE!

- We'll idolize stuff based on the meaning it gives us, but temporary pursuits are fleeting and fickle & vain!
- Jesus' bigger purpose is better: His plan is eternal, not vain
 - Heb. 1:11, ...*They will perish, but you remain...*
 - Heb. 1:12, ...*You remain the same... Your years will never end...*
- Ecclesiastes 3:11, *He has also set eternity in the human heart...*
- With that awareness comes a hope that we can one day find a fulfillment not provided by vain pursuits.

Hebrews 2:1-3, ¹ *We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.* ² *For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,* ³ *how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?...*

Be careful with your idols:

- The warning: the drift of idolatry and sin is spiritually dangerous!
- At the root of all sin is a heart that prefers anything more than God.
- Romans 1:25, *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.*
- Repent of purely negative idols and return formerly positive pursuits, that became idols, back to health.
- Book: *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, & Power, & the Only Hope that Matters*
- Jesus' safety is better: He keeps us secure in Him

Hebrews 2:14-18, ¹⁴ *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

- Jesus' help is better: He meets our deepest needs
 - He draws near to rescue us! (Heb. 2:14)
 - He shared in our death so we can share in His life! (Heb. 2:14)
 - He removes our fear of death so we can truly live! (Heb. 2:15)
 - He is a merciful & faithful priest with our sin! (Heb. 2:17)
 - He atones for our sin so we can be right with God! (Heb. 2:17)
 - He is empathetic with us as we are tempted! (Heb. 2:18)

The goal is not to try to love any good thing in this world less: love your children, love your spouse, love your friends, and love your work, but love God even more. What can you do this week to find your greatest joy in Him?