



Hebrews 1:1-4
 Hebrews: Seeing Jesus Clearly
 “The Sufficiency of Jesus”

Rev. Brian North
 February 22nd, 2026

If you’ve been with the Rose Hill Church family for the last three years or so, you may recall that over time we’ve worked through some of the overlooked books of the New Testament—such as Titus, Philemon, Jude, and others. Most of them are overlooked primarily because they’re shorter than others. Maybe we even subconsciously feel they aren’t quite as important because they’re short, and so we tend to ignore them.

Well, today we embark on a journey through another letter that is often overlooked—though it certainly isn’t because it’s small. The Book of Hebrews is one of the longer books in the New Testament, and yet it is not particularly well read. There are probably a few reasons for this (four here):

1. **Its name and content are Old Testament-heavy.** Hebrews—by its very name—sounds like it belongs in the Old Testament; in fact, I think many Christians forget that it’s in the New Testament. And it refers to the Old Testament constantly, especially the Old Testament sacrificial system, temple worship, and people of the Old Testament. The original audience was likely Jewish Christians who would have understood these things deeply. Most of us, however, are Christians who did *not* grow up Jewish, and do not have that same depth of knowledge. So, all of that can make the book feel intimidating or difficult to follow.
2. **Its writing style shifts frequently.** Hebrews moves fluidly between doctrine, teaching, and exhortation, which can make the reasoning harder to track.
3. **Its themes recur and overlap.** Topics reappear multiple times, giving the book a circular feel. This can be challenging for modern readers, especially us with a Western mindset, who prefer more of a linear flow.
4. **Its author and audience are unknown.** Because we don’t know exactly who wrote Hebrews or precisely who first received it, the book can feel more ambiguous and less approachable to some Christians.

All of this results in Hebrews being read less than other New Testament writings. **However, Hebrews is theologically rich—and a big reason is its deep Old Testament connections and the way it presents Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s redemptive work.** There is a lot in it. Some of the things that make Hebrews challenging are also what make it incredibly rewarding.

One final comment that will maybe help us be motivated to dive into this—and this really needs to be said at the start of the series: it’s clear from the title, Hebrews, that God loves coffee. And that’s got to be a good sign about what’s in it, right? I mean, how can we ignore a book that literally tells us, “He brews”? The only thing better would be if it were titled, “He Brews Caramel Macchiatos.” That would be heavenly, I think! Regardless, I’m excited about diving into this over the next 10 weeks or so and hope you are as well. With that, let’s turn to **Hebrews 1:1-4**. This is God’s Word to you and me this morning.

So: Unlike most New Testament letters and the conventional letter format of the day, there is no greeting and no naming of the author. Because of the prevalence of Paul’s letters in the New Testament, he has probably been the most commonly proposed author. But Hebrews was likely not written by the apostle Paul—it just doesn’t match his typical style or letter structure, and the theological vocabulary is different even if some of the theological themes are similar. But as John Calvin notes, the value of Hebrews does not depend on knowing the human author.

We know it is a letter, however, written to a group of Christians. This is most clearly seen in how it *ends* with a demonstration of a personal relationship between the writer and the audience. In the final few sentences, the author updates them about Timothy, whom they clearly know. He says he hopes to visit them. He asks them to greet others in the church. He adds that “those from Italy send their greetings.” (Which makes this a great series to begin with the Olympics in northern Italy ending today.) And the letter closes with the familiar words and common ending of NT letters, “Grace be with you all.”

We don't know exactly where these people lived who got the letter, but internal clues—including the opening lines—suggest they were likely Jewish believers. For instance, the author begins by saying that “in the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets.” Were these Jewish Christians living in Israel, even Jerusalem? Maybe. However, based on the letter itself, most scholars believe they were living in Rome or some other city outside of Israel.

Now, if you were reading these verses without knowing the Christian faith, you might not immediately realize the “Son” refers to Jesus. In fact, the name Jesus doesn't appear until 2:9. But the audience knew exactly who the Son was. “Son” is a common New Testament title for Jesus.

And: These opening verses make several astounding truth claims about Jesus. None of these truths are unique to Hebrews; they are taught elsewhere, many by Jesus himself. What is striking here is the rapid-fire presentation of these truths. *In just four verses* (verses 2-4 actually), the author declares that Jesus:

- is God's Son
- is the one through whom God now speaks
- is the appointed heir of all things
- is the one through whom the universe was made
- is the radiance of God's glory
- is the exact representation of God's being
- sustains all things
- provides purification for sins
- sits at the right hand of God
- is greater than the angels

If these four verses were the only words ever written about Jesus, we would still at least sit up and take notice. We would want to know more about this person. We might even conclude that He is worthy of worship and adoration just based on these verses. Fortunately, we know his name and have

a lot more information about him. But the sheer density of truth here is stunning.

The final claim of these verses—that Jesus is greater than the angels—may puzzle us. Verse 4 says: **“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs” (Hebrews 1:4)**. This (“became” especially catches our attention) is not suggesting that Jesus was once inferior to angels. That would contradict everything else said here—that He created the universe, sustains all things, and perfectly reveals God, for example. Clearly, he is greater than angels.

Rather, this refers to His exaltation after completing His redemptive work. He left the glory of heaven, humbled Himself, took on human flesh, and offered Himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. The Gospels are the documents that give this in greatest detail. Philippians, which is definitely one of Paul’s letters, summarizes it beautifully in chapter 2. And after this work—after being “lowered” and becoming flesh and so forth—He was then exalted to His rightful place at the right hand of God, where he had been before.

When verse 4 speaks of “the name he inherited,” it refers to the title “Son of God”—a name no angel has ever received. Verses 5–13 expand on this, quoting the Psalms and emphasizing His unique relationship with the Father. So, Jesus always was and is greater than the angels. Always has been, always will be. Yet he willingly humbled himself; and after his life, death, and resurrection, he was then restored to his rightful place in heaven.

Now: **The other truth claims in these verses are probably a little clearer for those of us who are disciples of Jesus.** And throughout the book of Hebrews, we will see these themes recurring and expanded, just as the claim about being greater than the angels is explained in verses 5-13.

One of the central themes we will encounter throughout Hebrews is that Jesus is better, or greater than, or superior to, everything or everyone who came before. Again, we see it here that Jesus is “superior” to the angels. But we also see this idea of Jesus being “greater than” in other ways in the first two verses.

In verse one, the writer says, **“In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways” (Hebrews 1:1).** That’s what God *used* to do. **“But now he has spoken by his son [Jesus]” (Hebrews 1:2).** While the author doesn’t explicitly say that Jesus is “better than” or “superior to” the prophets of old, that is clearly the implication: God once spoke through these other people, “*but now*” it is through His son. Jesus is a better prophet, pointing people to God, calling them out of darkness and into the light of a right relationship with God.

That’s what the prophets of old did – whether it was Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, or any of the others; they spoke hard truths about sin and called people back to a right relationship with God. It was not an easy job, because people generally don’t like being told that the sin they’re engaging in and that they enjoy isn’t approved by God.

For instance, have you ever told someone – like a child in your home – that their behavior was sinful, or maybe you worded it differently: that their behavior wasn’t appropriate? Sometimes when parents do that, the response is not good: defensive, blaming, excuse-making, etc. At least, I’ve heard that’s how some kids respond. Sometimes even adults respond that way – you and I certainly have at times. So, prophets call out sin on God’s behalf, and it wasn’t an easy job. That doesn’t make God the head of the “no fun club.” It simply means that for the sake of our flourishing and God’s glory some things are off-limits—and when we go there, it’s called sin. The prophet’s role was to name that reality and point people back to God.

Jesus does the same. **He speaks the hard truths we need to hear about sin in our lives—pride, coveting, sexual immorality, greed, and so forth—and then points us to God. And in doing so, he pointed people to himself.** So, he’s the prophetic voice we listen to now because he does it more completely. He didn’t just show us what to do; He did what was required. He fulfilled the atonement for sin, the Old Testament sacrificial system. As verse 3 says, he “provided purification for sins.” That was accomplished at the cross.

So, here's what I want us to take away from these four verses today: **God has spoken fully and finally in his Son—Jesus—who reveals God to us, makes a way for us to be reconciled to God, and reigns over everything.**

Jesus is a better prophet, but he's more than that: He is God's Son.

He's a better priest but he's more than that: He's the full and final sacrifice for our sin.

He's higher than the angels.

He is the full and final revelation of God.

He is the full representation of God.

He is the radiance of God's glory.

He has the full and final authority over all Creation.

In other words: Christ is enough. God so loved the world—God loved *you* so much—that he gave us his one and only son—and *no other is needed*. Jesus is sufficient. And I pray that you would know his sufficiency in your life today, tomorrow, and for eternity. Let's pray...Amen.