



HEBREWS

Jesus is **GREATER THAN...SO STAND FIRM**

JESUS IS GREATER THAN...

BUT STILL HUMAN—CHAPTER 2

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This chapter is an exercise in Christology, an examination of the identity and nature of Christ himself. While the modern Christian has the benefit of the whole canon of Scripture and 2000 years of tradition to aid in his or her understanding of Christ, there are still disputes about his divinity, his humanity, and how his ministry saves us. For the original audience, there was a significant challenge as heresies sprang into existence almost immediately after the church was born. Consequently, the author of Hebrews had to address misunderstandings and ignorance around the person of Christ. If believers don't get this right, how can we hope to share it with others?

IMPORTANT: As always, we encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by committing the class and the teaching to God in prayer. After this, we encourage you to dig into not only the specific chapter in Hebrews for this week (Chapter 2), but also the book of Hebrews as a whole and the Scriptures at large. As you move through your readings, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is **ONLY AFTER DOING THESE THINGS** that you should approach this lesson plan and perhaps use it as a guide. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER

Begin your time with a prayer asking God to show you the **REAL JESUS** and how to share that Jesus with the world.

FOCUS

- WARNING – Don't drift away from the faith!
- Jesus Christ was both human and divine.
- Jesus ministry was to save us.
- To share Jesus to the world we have to know Him.
- Recognize that **JESUS IS GREATER THAN** and so we should stand firm in our faith.

LESSON

Discussion Starters (OPTIONAL)

- Cigarette packs, commercials about prescription medicines, cans of bug and weed killer, fences around electrical and nuclear power plants—they all carry strong warning! They are designed to keep us from life-threatening situations. Hebrews 2 shares the first of six prominent warning signs in the letter. The first warning alerts us to the danger of drifting off course in our faith. The Hebrew author encourages us to stay the course.
- What might cause us to "drift off course" while running the race for Christ, or let "such a great salvation" slip away as if a ring slipped from your finger?

FROM GOD'S WORD

- 2:1-4
 - Key Points
 - This is the first of several "warning" passages in this letter.
 - For the modern Christian, the idea that Jesus supersedes the angels seems fairly obvious.
 - However, we have the benefit of the entirety of scripture. The audience of this letter did not and many, believers and unbelievers alike, struggled with confusion and error around Jesus' true nature and his "place" in God's saving work.
 - For Discussion
 - The author warns against "downgrading" Jesus and his message. How do people attempt to "downgrade" him today?
- 2:5-9
 - Key Points
 - The present (to the audience) world is governed by angels, but the world to come will be governed by the Redeemer.
 - What is "the world to come" to the original audience? The body of Christ *and* the world after His return.
 - The author quotes Psalm 8:4-6

- The incarnation of Christ, as we have read elsewhere, can be a stumbling block; especially when considering the culmination of his ministry was his own crucifixion.
 - Once again, to understand why the author stresses this we need to see the gospel from the intended audience's point of view: How can Jesus be above the angels and still be human?
 - The author answers this question by reminding them that the incarnation was temporary and necessary to Jesus' work as the messiah or redeemer.
 - His death frees all believers from their own death.
 - Christ's glory comes because of, rather than in spite of, His death.
- 2:10-18
 - Key Points
 - The author declares that the most offensive aspect of Jesus, His crucifixion, is the most appropriate means of perfecting Jesus as the pioneer of salvation.
 - The word translated as "pioneer," *archegos*, is applied four times to Christ in the NT; twice in Acts and twice in Hebrews. All of the definitions of *archegos* indicate leadership or "going ahead of others".
 - For Discussion
 - How is Jesus our *archegos* or pioneer?
- 2:11-13
 - Key Points
 - Because of his suffering, Jesus, who is above the angels, still has solidarity with humanity; going so far as to identify those who follow him as his siblings
 - The author references three OT passages to reinforce this idea of sibling status: Psalm 22:22, 2 Sam. 22:3, Isa. 8:17 – 8:18
- 2:14-15
 - Key Points
 - Jesus experienced all things that human beings experience, including death. However, his death overthrew Satan as the one who holds dominion over death and freed humanity from the fear of death.

- It should be noted that the word translated “destroy”, *katargeo*, actually means to deprive of power. “Destroy” is a poor translation that suggests that Satan no longer should be considered a threat. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- 2:16-18
 - Key Points
 - Once again, the author emphasizes that Jesus was fully human.
 - Jesus functions as high priest and the author attributes two particular qualities to him:
 - *Faithful* – because the incarnation and suffering were acts of obedience to the Lord
 - *Merciful* – because he knows everything about testing and suffering, having undergone it himself
 - It cannot be emphasized enough how radical the notion of a God becoming human to experience human suffering was in the ancient world.
 - For Discussion
 - Why did Jesus have “to be made like his brothers (you and me) in every way”?
 - How does knowing that Jesus was fully human help you when you are tempted?

REFLECTION

- How many outcomes or results are attributed to Jesus’ death in this chapter?
- Is the idea of a God becoming human still challenging? Why or why not?
- If so, how is the challenge different for us than for the first-century believer?
- “Please make sure your seatbelts are securely fastened,” the pilot warns you as turbulence is approaching. What can you do to help other believers be “securely fastened” into Jesus?

PRAYER

LESSON OUTLINE – Here are the lessons we will be studying the weeks to come.

- INTRODUCTION (January 5)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 12)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 19)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...But Still Human–Chapter 2 (January 26)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Moses–Chapter 3 (February 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 4 (February 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 5 (February 16)
- THEREFORE, Don't Fall Away–Chapter 6 (February 23)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Melchizedek–Chapter 7 (March 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Law–Chapter 8 (March 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Tabernacle –Chapter 9 (March 16)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Sacrifices–Chapter 10 (March 23)
- THEREFORE, Have Faith–Chapter 11 (March 30)
- THEREFORE, Stand Firm–Chapter 12 (April 6)
- THEREFORE, Offer Acceptable Sacrifices–Chapter 13 (April 13)
- CONCLUSION (April 27)