



Hebrews

Growing up in Christ

Sample Lesson #1
and
Leader's Guide Answers

1

God's Ultimate Revelation

Read: Hebrews 1:1–14; other references as given.

What do you value most in life? Is it family, happiness, money, position (career success, influence within your community or church), or personal achievement? What motivates you toward a relentless pursuit of your goal? What we value most, we will pursue most ardently.

The writer of Hebrews presents Jesus Christ's superior value with the hope of inspiring his readers to strive for spiritual maturity. In Hebrews chapter one, Jesus is presented as God's ultimate revelation to man and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:1–3). Then the writer demonstrates Christ's superior value to angels, and concludes this chapter with a summary statement about the ministry of angels to believers today.

Before you begin, ask God to reveal Himself through His Word and to give you grace to accept the truths you will be learning.

1. The book of Hebrews begins abruptly, without identifying the human writer. Throughout the centuries, conservative Bible scholars have suggested various authors for Hebrews, but in the end, most agree with the third century theologian, Origen, who said "*God only knows the truth.*"
 - a. Why isn't it essential to know the human author of Hebrews—or any other book of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21)?
 - b. How does the writer describe his letter (Hebrews 13:22)?
2. The writer begins by making a specific point: God's primary means of communicating to His people in these last days (the time between the first and second comings of Christ) has changed. God spoke to the Old Testament Jewish forefathers at various (NIV—"many") times and in various ways (Hebrews 1:1).
 - a. List four distinct ways God communicated to His people in the Old Testament (Genesis 3:9–13, 31:24; Ezekiel 1:1; Daniel 2:17–23, Amos 3:7).
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 - b. What *do you think* is the meaning of the statement, **God...has spoken to us by His Son** (Hebrews 1:2)?
3. When the Bible uses the phrase "The word of the Lord came to..." or, "Thus says the Lord..." it means God is communicating new truth or revelation to man. However, when some Christians make the statement "God spoke to me" they often mean the Holy Spirit convicted or convinced them of a specific truth from God's Word. In light of Hebrews 1:2, *do you think* a Christian should make a statement like this? Why?
4. List nine things the Bible says about Jesus Christ (include verse references) that make him unique and superior to anyone who ever lived, including angels (Hebrews 1:2–4).

5. What *do you think* is meant by the phrase, **the express image of His person** (Hebrews 1:3; NIV—“exact representation of his being”) (John 14:8–11)?

6. After introducing Jesus Christ as God the Father’s ultimate revelation to man (Hebrews 1:1–3), the writer contrasts Jesus Christ to angels (Hebrews 1:4–13) and then concludes the chapter with a statement about the current ministry of angels (Hebrews 1:14). The Jews held angels in very high regard because God used them to deliver the Law to Moses (Acts 7:53). In Hebrews 1:5–14, the writer quotes seven Old Testament passages (five from the Psalms) to prove why Jesus is superior to angels. Use the verse divisions to identify five reasons for Christ’s supremacy (Hebrews 1:5; 6, 7, 8, 9, 10–12, 13, 4).

7. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the creator of the world (Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16), but in Hebrews 1:6 it says He was the firstborn. In what way(s) *do you think* Jesus Christ can be both the creator and the firstborn (Hebrews 1:6)?

8. Angelology, the study of angels both good and evil (demons), fascinates and confuses many Christians. Some believers prefer to deny the existence of the angelic world, while others seem obsessed with demonic activity to the point of spiritual paranoia. What do the following verses teach about angels (Matthew 13:36–42, 22:29, 30; Luke 15:10, 20:34–36; 1 Peter 1:10–12; Revelation 7:11, 12)?

9. Many people, including some Christians, believe guardian angels watch over them. The idea that adults have guardian angels is loosely based on Jesus’ own words: **Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven** (Matthew 18:10).
 - a. Do you think it is right for a Christian to believe in having his own guardian angel? Why?

 - b. Angels are created beings who worship and serve God, and minister to believers (Hebrews 1:14). List two possible ways Christians could be led astray by believing that angels are more than ministering spirits (Colossians 2:18; Exodus 20:3).

Leader's Guide

1 God's Ultimate Revelation

1. a. The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). The individuals God used to write the Bible were supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit so the words in the original manuscripts were inspired and inerrant.
b. A brief word of exhortation. The Greek word for exhortation (*parakaleo*) can be translated to mean encourage or exhort. The letter's general tenor seems to favor exhortation because the writer uses direct language to challenge the readers to escape spiritual apathy and go on to spiritual maturity.
2. a. God spoke directly to Adam (Genesis 3:9–13). God spoke to Laban in a dream (Genesis 31:24). God revealed Himself to the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel in visions (Ezekiel 1:1; Daniel 2:17–23). God revealed His will to His people through the prophets (Amos 3:7).
b. God revealed Himself in the past (the Old Testament period) through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but He revealed Himself in these last days through Jesus Christ. The use of the Greek aorist tense to describe both the completion of God's revelation in the Old Testament era and His revelation through Jesus is significant. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets' prophecies and the completion of God's revelation to man. No new revelation from God should be expected by His people.
3. A believer should probably refrain from using a phrase like this to avoid giving the (erroneous) impression that God still provides new revelation to man. However, since many Christians use similar phrases to refer to the Holy Spirit's work in their lives (not new revelation from God), it would be wrong to constantly correct those who make innocent mistakes that can be easily interpreted in the believer's mind. Christians must realize that the work of sanctification is God's responsibility.
4. 1. He is God's son (v. 2). 2. He is God's the Father's final revelation in these last days (v. 2). 3. He is the heir of all things (v. 2). 4. He is the creator of the universe (v. 2). 5. He is the brightness of His glory (v. 3). 6. He is the express image of God, the Father's person (v. 3). 7. He upholds or sustains all things by the power of His word (v. 3). 8. He has paid man's complete sin debt (v. 3). 9. He has assumed a place of honor next to the Father (v. 3), and He is better than the angels (v. 4).
5. Jesus Christ is the very image or stamp of God the father. The normal Greek word for image is *eikon*, but in this phrase the Greek word *charakter* (from which we derive the English word character) is used and this is the only appearance of this word in the New Testament. The word refers to an engraved character or impression made by a die or seal. It is used with special reference to *distinguishing characteristics* that identify it with the original. Jesus Christ is the exact representation or express image of the father even though they are two separate entities.
6. 1. (Hebrews 1:5) Only Jesus is God's son.
2. (Hebrews 1:6, 7) Jesus receives worship, but the angels are only servants.
3. (Hebrews 1:8, 9) Only Jesus reigns supreme over an eternal kingdom.
4. (Hebrews 1:10–12) Only Jesus is the eternal creator.
5. (Hebrews 1:13, 14) Jesus was invited to sit in the place of privilege at the father's right hand. Angels are servants who have been commissioned to serve believers.
7. The Greek word for firstborn (*prototokos*) can mean first in time or first in importance. The word refers to Christ's supreme status as first in importance in this world (as well as in the eternal state). It probably also refers to the privileged position of the firstborn son within the Jewish culture.
8. Angels serve as God's agents to gather the wicked for the final judgment (Matthew 13:36–42). Angels do not marry (Matthew 22:29, 30). Angels rejoice over the salvation of individual souls (Luke 15:10). Angels are eternal (Luke 20:34–36). Angels are not omniscient. They have a desire to understand the things of God (1 Peter 1:10–12). They worship God in His very presence (Revelation 7:11, 12).
9. a. Nothing is mentioned in the Bible about adult believers having guardian angels. Christians should focus their spiritual attention on Christ's presence, protection, and provision—not those who are merely servants of God.
b. An unbiblical focus on angels can lead to worship of angels (Colossians 2:18) and violating God's prohibition to not place any other gods before Him (Exodus 20:3).