

## **The Message of Hebrews: Jesus is Greater!**

### **By David Feddes**

Hebrews is a challenging book of the Bible. It's not everybody's favorite. It deals with some very difficult topics, such as Melchizedek and the role of Melchizedek in the Bible. When you read the Old Testament, you find that Melchizedek is only mentioned for a paragraph or two. Sometimes Hebrews deals with things that aren't part of regular Christian practice anymore: the blood of bulls and goats, the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary, and a whole bunch of other things that may seem very outdated or very difficult for us to think about.

But the book of Hebrews is a tremendous book of the Bible. It is a beautiful book in so many respects, and even the passages that we find somewhat difficult can really be valuable and shed a lot of light on our walk with God—and above all, on the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

So I'd like to think with you about this book of Hebrews and about its meaning. I want to start simply by talking about the question of who wrote it—who was the human author of the book of Hebrews? And the answer is pretty sharp: unknown. We don't know who wrote the book of Hebrews for sure. We know that God inspired it, but we don't know which human was the primary author of it.

We know from the King James Bible that some important people thought the apostle Paul wrote it, because the King James Bible says "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," but that's the King James titling—it's not part of the text of Hebrews itself. So we can't be absolutely sure who wrote it, because all the other epistles of Paul start out with the words "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God." Hebrews does not start out that way.

The author did have a very deep knowledge of the Old Testament and a very wide-ranging knowledge of Jewish practices. That much is very clear from the book of Hebrews. So there are a number of possible candidates that have been suggested.

One is Barnabas. Barnabas was from the priestly tribe of Levi, and so you could expect him to know a lot about priestly matters. He was a companion of Paul, so many of the similarities in the book of Hebrews to Paul's writings could be explained if Barnabas were the author. Barnabas was, of course, a widely respected missionary and leader in the church. The church father Tertullian wrote around the year 200 about an epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas. Now that's not proof that our Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Barnabas—perhaps there was a different epistle addressed to Hebrews that had been written by Barnabas, or at least was alleged to be. But he may well have been referring to the book of the Bible that we call the book of Hebrews and was attributing it to Barnabas. At any rate, Barnabas is one very live possibility for authorship of the book of Hebrews.

Another possible author that some have suggested is Apollos. We know from the Bible that Apollos was a native of Alexandria, and he was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. We also know that he was acquainted with Paul, so again you'd be able to account for some overlap with Paul's writings. At the same time, some ideas and some ways of thinking and expressing things were quite common in Alexandrian thinking. For example, the idea of a

shadow and then the fulfillment or the substance was something that Greek-influenced thought in Alexandria sometimes used to express things. I could give other examples, but my point is, there are some discernible commonalities with thought that had become common in Alexandria. So perhaps Apollos would be a candidate.

And a third candidate is Paul. It is different in its style, and certainly in its opening, from the epistles of Paul that are uncontested and certainly by Paul. But even this one could have been by Paul, because there is a tradition that Paul was the author, and he may have just used a different secretary to write this one. We know that Paul wrote many of his letters by dictating to someone else, whether because of his bad eyesight or maybe he had lousy handwriting—we're not sure. But he would often give the name of his co-author along with his own when he wrote his epistles. Maybe he wrote this one using a different secretary, or maybe Paul just wrote it in a very different style than he wrote elsewhere. Some authors are very varied in style, and you can't always predict what their style is going to be like just because you've read most of their writings. Because the epistle deals so much with matters specifically related to Jewish custom and to Hebrews, maybe Paul just wrote in a really different style than he had in some of his other epistles, though still with a lot of similar content.

At any rate, the short answer remains true: we don't know for sure who the author of Hebrews was, but we do know that he knew Jewish practices and priestly practices very well.

Who was the audience of Hebrews? Well, it's pretty clear who the audience was. The audience was made up of Jewish believers facing some very big questions. We know from the book of Acts that a large number of priests became Christians—became obedient to the faith. The high priests, the really big shots who held the power and were making money off of the temple racket—they were the ones who killed Jesus, and they didn't convert. But a good number of just the regular priests evidently became obedient to the faith, became followers of Jesus.

When you were a priest—or when you were just a devout Jewish person in general—a number of questions would come up if you converted to Jesus Christ. One would be: how highly should we regard Jesus? It was a very clear, central, and strong teaching of Old Testament religion and of Jewish belief that there is one God. And Jesus seemed to claim equality with God in his speaking. But it was a question that people had to deal with: how do we regard him? Just how high is he? Is he a prophet? Is he something higher than that? For those who were wavering in their opinion of Jesus, this epistle would help clarify it.

How much of salvation depends on Jesus, and how much on other things? Jesus died and rose again, and if you were a Christian, I'm sure you believed that was necessary for salvation. But what about the sacrifices that are still going on over at the temple? What about the practice of various rituals, and how much of salvation might depend on living up to those things or receiving circumcision or what have you from Old Testament commands? This was an area of thinking that people had to sort out. Should we do the temple rituals and offer sacrifices and depend on the priesthood, or should we just go entirely with a new pattern of worship and leave behind the sacrifices and the slaughtering of animals?

And this one: is this new faith worth suffering for? This was not an academic question. Many of them were facing opposition and persecution from their fellow Jewish believers, and they would also face persecution from Roman authorities. So they had to really dig deep and say, is this worth it? Is this new faith in Jesus Christ something that's worth suffering for?

So with those comments about the author and about the audience, let's start thinking about the book of Hebrews itself and some of its details. The details sometimes can be hard to sort through and figure out. So it's very important to get one thing clear right away: whatever is complicated, whatever might be hard to follow, the main message of Hebrews is very clear—Jesus is greater.

Jesus is greater. The rest of the book is just amplifying that and explaining it in relation to a whole bunch of different areas. Jesus is greater than prophets. God spoke many times and in various ways, but he has spoken through his Son, and Jesus is greater than any prophet. Angels are important and impressive. They have great work. Jesus is greater than angels. Jesus is greater than Moses—great as Moses himself was, Jesus is greater still. Jesus is greater than the land of Israel. Jesus is greater than the Sabbath, the sacred rest that God promised, and greater than the rest that God gave in the land of Canaan. Jesus is greater than all that. Jesus is greater than any priest. Jesus is greater than the whole tabernacle and temple.

Jesus brings a greater covenant than the older covenant. He brings about a new way of relating to God that far surpasses the previous. Jesus offers a greater sacrifice than any of the bulls and goats that were offered under the old covenant. And one more thing must be emphasized, even though it's not very pleasant: there is greater punishment for unbelief in Jesus. Because he is so much greater than any revelation of God that came before—so much greater than any gift of God that came before—therefore, to reject him in his full revelation brings even greater punishment. That is a recurring refrain throughout the book of Hebrews.

Jesus brings in a greater era for faith. There were old covenant heroes of faith, and they were admirable, but they were all looking forward to this era when God's Son would be fully revealed. Jesus brings us to a greater city than the city of earthly Jerusalem. Jesus brings greater insight into trial and the meaning of trial in our lives, and the difficulties and sufferings—we can understand that better than ever before because of Jesus. Jesus brings us to a greater mountain, a greater mountain than Mount Sinai, where God gave his law amid much impressive display of power and thunder and lightning. Jesus brings us to a greater mountain than Mount Zion, the earthly mountain on which Jerusalem was built. Jesus brings us to a heavenly mountain, as it were, and a heavenly kingdom. Jesus gives us participation in a greater meal and a greater altar. In one area after another, Jesus is greater.

Let's look first at how Jesus is greater than the prophets, because that's where the book of Hebrews begins: "In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 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" (Hebrews 1:1–3).

There's no prophet who was the perfect representation of God, the exact radiance of God, the one who is God, sustaining all things by his powerful word—the very Son of God. Hebrews makes it very clear: Jesus is not just one more prophet who's a little better than the rest. Jesus is vastly greater than all prophets because he is God with us. He lived among us, he provided purification for sins, and then he returned to the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. In other words, he returned to his position as deity—as God the Son, alongside God the Father. He's greater than prophets.

He's greater than angels. "Jesus became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. When God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him'" (Hebrews 1:4,6). That's why the angels were praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest," when Jesus was born. God was bringing his Son into the world, and Jesus is far greater than angels.

At that time, there were some people who were tempted to worship spirits or to worship angels or to pray to angels. In our own time, there can sometimes be an undue interest in angels or raising them too high. Hebrews says, Jesus is greater than any angel, and so you must worship him because the angels worship him.

Jesus is greater than Moses. You can't find a much bigger name than Moses in all of Old Testament revelation. Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible. God spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend—that's what the Scripture says. And yet Jesus is greater than Moses: "Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of the house has greater honor than the house itself. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, but Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house" (Hebrews 3:3,5–6).

Moses was a good servant. He was a good worker. God loved him. Moses did his job with God's help. But Jesus is the Son—he's the owner, he's the ruler over God's house. So he is far greater than Moses. If you're tempted to say, "Oh, Moses is the greatest, and nobody can surpass him," that would really be a temptation if you were a Jewish person—especially a Jewish person of that time. The message of the gospel is: Jesus is greater than Moses.

Jesus is greater than the promised land of Canaan, or Israel, or any Jewish Sabbath. He is a greater rest.

“Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed?” (Hebrews 3:16–18). The people whom God led out of Egypt got to the borders of the promised land, and then they fell back and shrank back because of lack of faith, and they never got into that promised land of rest—only their children did. There was this rest that people wanted to get to when they entered that promised earthly land. But Jesus is a greater rest than that land. He is a greater rest than the Sabbath.

Now, the question: if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. “There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). And it's not just the Sabbath rest of the land of Israel or the rest of the Sabbath day itself—it is the rest of Jesus

Christ himself, resting from our works and resting in his work on our behalf. “Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:11)—that greater rest of a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is a greater priest than any of the old priests. Jesus is the high priest who meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. “Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 7:27). Jesus didn’t have any sins himself that he needed to offer a sacrifice for. Hebrews says that he was like us in every respect except for sin. So he was the perfect priest and greater priest because he didn’t have to offer sacrifices for his own sins at all. And he didn’t have to keep on offering sacrifices day after day, year after year, because he could offer a greater sacrifice.

He did so in a greater tabernacle: “We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary—the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man” (Hebrews 8:1–2). The priests serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven. So the tabernacle and the temple here on earth were just dim copies of a heavenly throne room of God, a heavenly place to worship him and have access to him. Jesus has entered that, and he is a greater tabernacle. “Through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, he entered once for all into the holy places” (Hebrews 9:11–12). So he’s in the real tabernacle—the heavenly one—and he is greater than any tabernacle. His abode, the place where he dwells and reigns, is greater than any tabernacle.

The old tabernacle had a place of worship, and inside was the Holy of Holies, which only one person once a year could enter. Sacrifices were offered of bulls and goats and animals to show the need for a sacrifice. But Jesus himself fulfilled that. The same was true of the temple that was later built. The temple, too, was a place of offering sacrifices repeatedly. It was an earthly place but only a very dim reflection of what goes on in heaven.

Jesus brought a greater temple and a greater sacrifice because he is the mediator of a greater covenant. “He has become the guarantee of a better covenant” (Hebrews 7:22). The old way of relating to God was a temporary way of dealing with people’s guilt and sin until Jesus would come. But Jesus brought a new and better covenant. “Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second” (Hebrews 8:6–7). If that first covenant could take care of everything, there would have been no need for another covenant. But there was great need for a better covenant because that covenant couldn’t make us right with God. Jesus comes with better promises and brings everything better in this newer covenant.

He gave a greater sacrifice. Hebrews is very definitive and clear about that: “He appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). It is the cross of Jesus, the blood of Jesus—nothing can add to that, and nothing should distract or detract from that. Once that sacrifice has been offered, to still have an interest in offering the

blood of animals under the old covenant would be to spit on the sacrifice that Jesus offered of himself. He offered a far greater sacrifice.

“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). We’ve been made holy. He’s all that we need. He is the greatest sacrifice that there ever has been or ever can be, and no further sacrifice is necessary. The reality of Jesus, the reality of his sacrifice, the reality of him as our tabernacle replaces the shadow. “It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence” (Hebrews 9:23–24). “He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves” (Hebrews 10:1). Those things were the shadow. Jesus is the reality, and reality is far greater than a shadow.

He did this once for all—that’s a repeated emphasis in Hebrews: “He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself” (Hebrews 7:27). “He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). He didn’t just get redemption till next week or until the next sacrifice had to be offered. It’s an eternal redemption because he did it once for all. “Now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). “We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

In more recent times, this has needed to be emphasized when the Lord’s Supper was treated as a repeated sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ that is offered over and over again. Hebrews emphasizes: no, Jesus offered himself once for all. That sacrifice is sufficient, and we only draw on the merits of that sacrifice. But he is not re-sacrificed again and again and again in a mass or in any other way. He was sacrificed once for all.

This finality of Jesus—this absolute sufficiency of Jesus as the final revelation, as the once-for-all sacrifice—is what makes everything before it obsolete, and means that everything after it can’t possibly add to who Jesus is or what he has done.

The greater punishment comes when we reject Jesus Christ. “For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:2–3). How can we neglect such a great salvation in Jesus Christ? If the law, and if angels, brought great punishment when they were rejected, then what happens when we reject Christ?

“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:28–29). Wow—what a wallop! In exalting Jesus and his blood and his Spirit so highly, the book of Hebrews also says:

if you reject this, woe to you. The punishment is so much greater than you could possibly imagine.

It's a greater era for faith with the coming of Jesus. There are new heroes of faith, and the older heroes of faith are described in Hebrews 11—people who “were all commended for their faith, and yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:39–40). So Abraham and Sarah and Moses and Gideon and all those other great heroes of faith were looking forward to a greater era that was coming. We live in a greater era for faith because we know Jesus with greater clarity.

Jesus brings us to a greater city than any on earth. Abraham “was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Even under the old covenant, Abraham was never caught up in thinking, “This land where I’m going is my final home,” or that some future city here on earth inhabited by his descendants would be his main home. He was looking to the city with foundations that God would build.

“Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:12–14). Jesus got thrown out of the city of Jerusalem and crucified on its garbage dump. Christians of that time were being thrown out of synagogues and being thrown out of their cities. The book of Hebrews says, “We’ve got a better city than any we’re getting kicked out of,” and we need to know that Jesus provides a greater city.

He gives us greater insight in trials: “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). That doesn’t mean he was ever disobedient to God, but he had never obeyed God to the full extent as when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood, ready to take the sin of the world upon himself. God his Father had never called upon him to do something that extreme before, but even there, Jesus obeyed through what he suffered.

“So let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:2–3). “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons” (Hebrews 12:7). Just as Jesus grew through suffering, so we grow through suffering. God disciplines us. That doesn’t just mean punishes—it can mean that, but it can also just mean he disciplines us, puts us through certain things for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

It is in the light of Jesus, and a walk with him, that we understand even what our trials can mean and how they can be good instruments in God’s hand—our loving Father training us as his children, as his sons.

Jesus brings us to a greater mountain: “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm... but you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands

of angels... to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven... to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant” (Hebrews 12:18,22–24). This new covenant brings us to the greater mountain—the mountain that had been prophesied in the Old Testament, now fulfilled in Jesus, as we meet our Lord at this greater mountain where the angels and the church and Jesus himself are gathered.

And we participate in a greater meal and a greater altar: “It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them” (Hebrews 13:9). All those laws about what you could and couldn’t eat, or the sacrifices that you were supposed to dine on—those were not important for people who knew Jesus, because their hearts fed on grace. “We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat” (Hebrews 13:10). We’ve got a greater meal and a greater altar.

Jesus is greater—greater than prophets, greater than angels, greater than Moses. He provides a greater rest than Israel’s land or the veracity of the Sabbath day of rest. He’s a greater priest than any of those other priests that came before him. He’s a greater tabernacle. He brings a greater covenant in his new covenant. He brings a greater sacrifice—far greater than the blood of bulls and goats. When we reject him, we face greater punishments for unbelief. He brings in a greater era for faith. He brings his people to a greater city with foundations. He gives us greater insight in trials. He brings us to this greater mountain with the angels and with Christ himself. And we get to participate and feed on grace and feed on the Lord’s Supper—not a bloody sacrifice, but on the Lord’s Supper with our mouths and on God’s grace with our hearts.

Jesus is greater.

As you study the book of Hebrews, as you read the book of Hebrews, you may still have questions. You may still say, “Well, what about this?” or, “I don’t quite get that.” But please, by all means, get this: Jesus is greater.

When you think about the prophets or the angels, about Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Sabbath—as you read the Old Testament, as you read the New Testament—Jesus is greater. He is greater than the promised land, the priests, the tabernacle, the temple, the Holy of Holies. They’re all pointing to Jesus. So are the sacrifices, the oath, the covenants, the heroic faith—all these things are discussed in Hebrews. The brave suffering, Mount Sinai, God’s promises, his punishments, the feasts that we have, the altar, the city of Jerusalem—for those original readers who came out of that background, they needed to know: Jesus is greater.

And you and I—we face our own challenges. We may have somewhat different questions on some matters, and others are still very similar. But the message that will calm our souls and lift our hearts to God and give him the worship he deserves is simply this: Jesus is greater.

That is the main purpose of the book of Hebrews—to get us to that point. Jesus is all-sufficient. He is the unchanging anchor: “You remain the same, and your years will never end” (Hebrews 1:12). These words are addressed to Jesus Christ.



“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:19–20). That priest of righteousness, that king of peace, was a great priest to whom even Abraham offered tribute. But Jesus is the new Melchizedek—the one who is in the order of Melchizedek. And we have him as the anchor for our souls.

Jesus is able to save completely because he always lives. He has his priesthood by virtue of an indestructible life—and that’s a pretty good qualification for priesthood. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

When the book of Hebrews was written, Jesus is greater—and Jesus is enough. And still today, as we read the book of Hebrews, Jesus is greater—and Jesus is enough. Because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

## **The Message of Hebrews: Jesus is Greater!**

**by David Feddes**  
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### **Author of Hebrews: Unknown**

Author had deep knowledge of Old Testament and Jewish practices. Possible candidates:

- **Barnabas:** from priestly tribe of Levi (Acts 4:36), companion of Paul, widely respected. [Tertullian wrote in 200 about “an epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas”]
- **Apollos:** “a native of Alexandria... a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures” (Acts 19:24); familiar with Paul
- **Paul:** using a different secretary or style

### **Audience of Hebrews: Jewish believers facing big questions**

“...a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

- How highly should we regard Jesus?
- How much of salvation depends on Jesus, and how much on other things?
- Should we do temple rituals of the old covenant, or go entirely with the new?
- Is the new faith worth suffering for?

### **Main Message of Hebrews: JESUS IS GREATER!**

#### **Jesus is greater**

- Greater than prophets (1:1-3)
- Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)
- Greater than Moses (3:1-6)
- Greater rest than Israel’s land or Sabbath (3:7-4:13)
- Greater priest (4:14-7:28)
- Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)

- Greater covenant (8:6-13)
- Greater sacrifice (9:7-10:25)
- Greater punishment for unbelief (recurring refrain)
- Greater era for faith (11:1-40)
- Greater city (11:10; 13:14)
- Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)
- Greater mountain (12:18-24)
- Greater meal and altar (13:9-10)

### **Greater than prophets (1:1-3)**

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 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. (1:1-3)

### **Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)**

So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs (1:4).

When God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." (1:6)

### **Greater than Moses (3:1-6)**

Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself... Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house... But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. (3:3-6)

### **Greater rest than Jewish land or Jewish Sabbath (3:7-4:13)**

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ... And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? (3:16, 18)

If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God... Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest (4:8-11).

### **Greater priest (4:14-7:28)**

Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. (7:26-27)

### **Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)**

We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.... They [the priests] serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.... (8:1-6)

Through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places (9:11)

### **Greater covenant (8:6-13)**

Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. (7:20-22)

Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.(8:6-7)

### **Greater sacrifice (9:7-10:25)**

He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. (9:26)

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (10:10).

### **Reality replaces shadow**

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ... he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin

by the sacrifice of himself. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves (9:23-10:1).

### **Once for all**

He sacrificed for their sins **once for all** when he offered himself (7:27).

He entered the Most Holy Place **once for all** by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (9:12).

But now he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (9:26)

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all** (10:10).

### **Greater punishment**

For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? (2:2-3)

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? (10:28-29)

### **Greater era for faith (11:1-40)**

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (11:39-40)

### **Greater city (11:10; 13:14)**

Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (11:10).

Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (13:12-14)

### **Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)**

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered (5:8). Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (12:2-3). Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons (12:7). God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness (12:10).

### **Greater mountain (12:18-24)**

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm... or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them... But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God... to thousands of angels, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.

### **Greater meal and altar**

It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. We have an altar [the cross] from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat (13:9-10).

### **Jesus is greater**

- Greater than prophets (1:1-3)
- Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)
- Greater than Moses (3:1-6)
- Greater rest than Israel's land or Sabbath (3:7-4:13)
- Greater priest (4:14-7:28)
- Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)
- Greater covenant (8:6-13)
- Greater sacrifice (9:7-10:25)
- Greater punishment for unbelief (recurring refrain)

- Greater era for faith (11:1-40)
- Greater city (11:10; 13:14)
- Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)
- Greater mountain (12:18-24)
- Greater meal and altar (13:9-10)

### **Jesus fulfills and surpasses Old Testament Scripture**

Prophets, angels, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Sabbath, promised land, priests, tabernacle, temple, Holy of Holies, sacrifices, oaths, covenants, heroic faith, brave suffering, Mount Sinai, promises, punishments, feast, altar, city of Jerusalem

### **JESUS IS GREATER!**

#### **All-sufficient, unchanging anchor**

You remain the same, and your years will never end" (1:12).

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure... He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (6:19-20)

He is able to save completely... because he always lives (7:25).

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (13:8).