

Like Us  
Hebrews 2:14-18

Jesus is not just better. He is best. He is the substance of any shadow the Tabernacle cast as it and all its elements pointed to him. *“Do not love a shadow. Love the person.”*

Whom is Jesus better than and how? Jesus better than angels.

- 1 – God is not a Father to any angel
- 2 – Jesus is worshipped by all the angels
- 3 – Angels are God’s ministering spirits but..
- 4 – Jesus is God himself, enthroned, sending angels
- 5 – Jesus is the Creator of everything
- 6 – The Father is making Jesus’s enemies his footstool
- 7 – Jesus provides a salvation that angels cannot
- 8 – The future world is subjected to Jesus
- 9 – All things exist by and for Jesus
- 10 – Jesus eternally sanctifies those who trust him

11 – Only Jesus – no angel – ever became like us. 2:14-18

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

**14 – *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,***

What is God like? He is like us. How?

- 1 – We are made in his image and so we reflect him
- 2 – He became like us, but without sin, to save us from our sin

Jesus, with regard to his human nature, has the same origin as his brothers and sisters. He does not stand apart from us.

Far from being a Savior who stands completely apart from His people, Jesus the Messiah shares our common humanity with all of its original dignity and yet without any of its fallenness.

Christ shares our humanity, and this has important, present implications -

- a) The body is important
- b) The body has dignity
- c) The physical is important
- d) Jesus defines humanity – He is the ‘human being’ because he alone was being human in his incarnation
  - God defines our humanity
  - We are only human as we relate to God
  - Jesus demonstrates *how* we should relate to God

2:10-11 - *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.<sup>11</sup> For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source*

- Jesus is the model for relating to God
- Jesus is the means for relating to God (Thank God for Pentecost)

The Incarnation was not accomplished for the purpose of giving tribute to the glory and worth of humanity. Because we are made in the image of God, humanity possesses great dignity.

But due to the Fall, this image is shattered, marred though not entirely broken, but, at best only a pale reflection of what it was, should be and will be.

Because of this, Christ became incarnate not to pay tribute to the image, but rather to rescue it. Verses 14–15 tell us that Christ partook of our nature so that by His death He might conquer the one who held the power of death and free those who were subject to lifelong slavery because of their bondage.

Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26–38), we are assured that our Savior is unstained by Adam’s sin and, therefore, that He is the perfect Mediator between us and God.

Ezekiel 18:4 – *The soul that sins will die*

Romans 6:23 – *The wages of sin is death*

The penalty for is death. Humans have sinned so humans must die.

God’s justice demands that human nature, which has sinned, just pay for it’s sin

God promised Adam that sinners would die, and this death must be understood both as the physical death of the body and the spiritual death of the soul in its banishment from the Lord’s blessed presence (Gen. 2:15–17; 3:22–24; Dan. 12:1–2). For God to be true to himself, his word and us, sinners must die physically and spiritually under the eternal curse of His wrath.

Why doesn't God just 'forget about it?' We do not want a God who forgets his promises. If he forgets Romans 6:23, we have no guarantee that he won't forget Romans 8:1 or John 3:16.

Our only hope for eternal life is a God who keeps his word.

At the same time, we understand that God cannot die. He "lives forever" (Dan. 4:34; Rev. 4:9–10a; 15:7), and were He to die, everything in the universe would cease to exist. It is a great mystery, but nevertheless we know that although the God-man Jesus Christ died on the cross, the Son of God, in His divine nature, did not die. Bottom line: God did not save us by committing suicide.

And so, our passage tells us that Jesus is just like us in every way except sin – 17 – *"in every respect..."*

Jesus possesses all that is necessary to be truly human and has experienced what it means to be a human creature who is wholly dependent on the Creator. Unlike His fallen brothers and sisters, who rejected this dependence in Adam, Jesus never sought to live independently of the Father. This remained true even when Satan promised Christ fantastic rewards in the hope that He would choose the same autonomy Adam chose (Matt. 4:1–11)

He is a "faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19). The only way he can be faithful to you, his creation is by being faithful to the Father. Christ's first allegiance is to the Father and we are the beneficiaries of that fidelity.

Hebrews 9:15-16 - *Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.<sup>[h]</sup> 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.*

Yet even though our Lord's conception was supernatural, it is important to note that the Father did not start from scratch when He sent His Son to earth. The Father did not create a new man out of the dust of the ground like He did when He created Adam (Gen. 2:7).

Instead, the incarnation took place in Adam's line (Luke 3:23–38).

Christ's humanity is therefore our humanity, even though the Son of God did not assume a fallen human nature in the incarnation. Jesus is connected

- a) genetically,
- b) experientially to the rest of Adam's children and
- c) salvifically only to those who put their faith in Him alone.

But how has Christ destroyed the devil if he is still our enemy? (Eph 2:-3a)

V 8 - *At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.*

Revelation 20:10 - *the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

**15 – and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.**

a) Deliverance from the fear of death

1 Corinthians 15:55-56 - *“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”* <sup>56</sup> *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* <sup>57</sup> *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

b) Subjection to lifelong slavery

Is this the lifelong slavery of the fear of death? If so, we are free by Christ’s resurrection.

Is it lifelong slavery to sin? Then Christ’s perfect life and perfect death have saved us.

- His perfect death has saved us from God’s wrath – we are delivered from death
- His perfect life has saved us from sin’s slavery –

Romans 5:10 - *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

In about 5 weeks we celebrate Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell all who believe. And it is that power, the power of Jesus’s Spirit within us that frees us from sin’s slavery

Romans 5:21 - *as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

a) Justification is a right standing with God

b) Sanctification is a right life before God

Romans 8:1-4 - *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* <sup>2</sup> *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you<sup>[b]</sup> free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* <sup>3</sup> *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,<sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

**16 – For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.**

“...gives help...” - F.F. Bruce comments: “*the verb is the same as that used in 8:9, where God recalls how he ‘took hold’ of his people Israel by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, and in both places the ‘taking hold’ carries with it the idea of help and deliverance*” [*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (1990). 87].

8:9 - “...on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.”

The author first notes who the Son of God did *not* take hold of — angels. If angels were the objects of God’s redeeming grace, then the Son would not have needed to become flesh and blood, for angels are spiritual (not flesh and blood) creatures. Instead, Jesus took hold of the descendants or seed of Abraham.

Why not the “seed of Adam?” Why the “seed of Abraham”

just who are the seed of Abraham? Is it Abraham’s physical descendants? Not at all. According to Galatians, the descendants of Abraham are those of faith (3:6-9, 29).

- The promises of God to bless the world were made to Abraham and his covenant seed (Rom. 4:13).
- Christ is the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16)
- In Christ, the Father fulfills the promise made in Genesis 12:1–3 that Abraham’s seed would bless the world.
- Those in Christ are Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:29), and are forgiven so that they might receive the blessing of God’s covenant with their forefather, Abraham.
- Christ is the Seed of Abraham, and Christ’s Church, being united to Christ, is also the seed of Abraham. Christ blesses the world by redeeming His Church and then using her to share the gospel in the world.

**17 – Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**

He is like us in every respect except sin.

Existing as one of us and resisting temptation enabled Jesus to “make propitiation” for His people and turn away God’s wrath. Also, by taking on our nature and enduring temptation, Jesus went before us in the battle against evil to show us that relying wholly on God is the only way we can defeat sin in our own lives.

In His humanity He also gained an experiential knowledge of temptation, one that enables Him to sympathize with us in our frailties and, as our Mediator, to give us what we need out of His entire person to fortify us against evil

Our Savior was truly tempted. Yet, He never gave in to sin. Because He succeeded, the glorified Christ, both in His humanity and in His deity, is able to give us just what we need to stand firm against the Evil One. We are united to the whole Christ by faith, and thereby we benefit both from His deity and His glorified humanity.

Merciful – He represents us

Faithful – He represents the Father

***18 – For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.***

The humanity of Christ is essential to our salvation, as only a human being can pay the price for the sins of human beings. There are other benefits as well. Verse 18 tells us that Jesus can help us when we are tempted because He, too, was tempted in His humanity.

Several places in the New Testament tell us that Christ underwent temptation. The best known of these is probably His direct encounter with Satan that occurred just before the beginning of His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:1–11). Sometimes, however, it can be hard to believe that these temptations were real. But Hebrews tells us otherwise, Christ underwent real temptations because He suffered while overcoming them.

Unlike us, Christ overcame every single temptation He ever experienced. He never gave in to sin (Heb. 4:15). Some people argue that since Christ never sinned, He never really experienced full humanity. However, that notion falsely assumes that sinning is inherent to humanity in our original design. Genesis 1:31 makes it clear that in our original state we were good and thus free from sin.

Some people also say that because Christ never sinned, He never really knew temptation. However, just because Christ never sinned, that does not mean He knows less about temptation. Christ had to conquer all His temptations in order to remain sinless, and His conquest only reinforces the reality of His temptation. Christ was fully aware of the full weight of temptation in ways that we are not because He endured greater and greater temptations without ever giving in to them. Because in all circumstances Christ resisted sin unto the end, He knew temptation even more strongly than we!

Bottom line: Christ's humanity insures his mercy. God himself knows what it is like to live in your skin because of the incarnation. God knows what it is like to be you, not just because He made you, though He did, not just because He knit you together in your mother's womb, though He did, but because in His Son He has taken on our flesh and blood.

**Conclusion:**

How is Jesus better than angels?

- 1 - Only Jesus – no angel – ever became like us.
- 2 – He is like us, not angels
- 3 – Jesus died for us and not angels
- 4 – He feels our feelings, not those of angels