

Jesus Is Superior

Superior To Angels

The writer to the Hebrews was using this epistle to passionately plead with Jewish Christians not to abandon Christ and return to Judaism. This epistle was written around 68AD just two years before the destruction of Jerusalem. This event was the central theme of Christ's prophetic statements in Matthew 24. The writer to the Hebrews seemed to realise that time was near for the complete fulfilment of what Christ predicted.

1. Match these references to the particular reference in Matthew 24 to show how the writer to the Hebrews must have known the time was ripe for the things spoken of by Christ -

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| (a) Matthew 24: _ _ | > | Acts 11:28 |
| (b) Matthew 24: _ _ | > | Acts 12:1-2 |
| (c) Matthew 24: _ _ | > | Acts 21:38 |
| (d) Matthew 24: _ _ | > | 1John 4:1 |
| (e) Matthew 24: _ _ | > | Colossians 1:5-6, 23 |



Added to this we know that there was an unusual amount of earthquakes, volcanic activity, wars in many parts of the empire toward 70AD. All of these events are recorded in the writings of Josephus (pictured left). In fact, Caesar Nero declared war on Jerusalem in late 66AD. This war concluded when Caesar Vespasian and his son, co-emperor, Titus completely overran and destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. Thus the war on Jerusalem lasted 1260 days (about three and half years, note Revelation 12:6). These were perilous times.

"For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Read the record written by Josephus of the destruction of Jerusalem, and see how truly our Lord's words were fulfilled. The Jews impiously said, concerning the death of Christ, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Never did any other people invoke such an awful curse upon themselves, and upon no other nation did such a judgment ever fall. We read of Jews crucified till there was no more wood for making crosses; of thousands of the people slaying one another in their fierce faction fights within the city; of so many of them being sold for slaves that they became a drug in the market, and all but valueless; and of the fearful carnage when the Romans at length entered the doomed capital; and the blood-curdling story exactly bears out the Saviour's statement uttered nearly forty years before the terrible events occurred."

C.H. Spurgeon, Commentary on Matthew 24:21

Just years before this event Jewish Christians were being pressured to abandon Christ and return to Judaism.

2. Perhaps one of the criticisms of Jews towards Christianity was that the prophets of the Old Testament could be trusted and therefore by implication that Christ could not. What assertion does the writer to the Hebrews make about Jesus Christ's relationship to God and perhaps the Old Testament prophets as well? (Hebrews 1:1-2)
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The author now sets about on his overall theme of proving Christ's superiority.

3. Who is Christ equal to according to Hebrews 1:3?

4. How else is Jesus described in Hebrews 1:3 that emphasizes His superiority?

Through the centuries some have taught that Christ was merely the *first* of God's creation. They have taught that He was an angel, perhaps even Michael the archangel. One of the most famous and earliest teachers of this heresy was bishop Arius (depicted right) who lived around 300AD. His views were debated by the Church in 312AD around eventually rejected. The result of this Church Council was the Nicene Creed.



5. Does Hebrews 1:4 mean that Christ was an angel?

One of the principles of sound Bible interpretation is *context*: Always read a verse in its immediate and surrounding context.

6. How does Hebrews 1:5 counter the suggestion that Christ was an angel?

Christ is described as the “firstborn”. This does not mean that He was created.

7. Note the context of these passages and see how the expression *firstborn* is used of Christ-

Colossians 1:18

Revelation 1:5

8. Christ said that only person was to be worshiped. Who did Christ say was the only one to be worshiped? (Matthew 4:10)

9. How does Hebrews 1:6 relate to this statement by Christ in Matthew 4:10? In other words, what does Hebrews 1:6 reveal about Christ?

Some have suggested that Christ is to be worshiped but in the same way that the Father is to be worshiped. They say that we salute people, shake the hands of others, or even bow down in the presence of some, that these are all forms of worship and in this context this is what the Bible means when it says to worship Christ.

10. How does John 5:23 correct this view?

Christ was no mere angel. He was God in the flesh (John 1:14). This is clearly what the Hebrews 1 teaches.

Amen.