

MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS

TEXT: HEBREWS 2:9-18

Introduction:

1. Over the years, I have preached many Christmas messages (some of them more than once), and most of them have been from the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke.
2. However, we do see the incarnation and the birth of Christ all throughout the Bible.
3. Over 700 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).
4. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).
5. The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. He wrote in Micah 5:2, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”
6. The apostle Paul wrote in I Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...”
7. Galatians 4:4, 5 says, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”
8. Psalm 8:5 says, “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” This great Messianic prophecy is explained in Hebrews 2:9 – “But we see Jesus...”
9. Psalm 8:6 says, “Thou hast put all things under His feet.” In I Corinthians 15:27, Paul quotes this in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ – “For He hath put all things under His feet.”
10. It was about 2,000 years ago that the fullness of time had come when Jesus would be made of a woman. And every year at Christmas time we all stop to acknowledge the wonderful birth of Christ.
11. Some people acknowledge the fact that Jesus was born 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem. And many acknowledge that Jesus is God.

12. However, most people prefer not to think too much about that. They prefer Rudolph the Red-nose Reindeer, and Santa Claus, and going shopping and to parties, etc.
13. In fact, for most people, Christmas is a time to shop and receive presents, and go to worldly parties, and to drink, and engage in sin.
14. Most people are so busy with all of this foolishness, to even bother to figure out why Jesus came into this wicked world in the first place.
15. Jesus Himself told us why He came. Our Lord said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
16. The apostle Paul said in I Timothy 1:15, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
17. This morning I would like for us to consider these questions – “Why was Jesus born? Why did He come? What is Christmas all about?”
18. There is really only one primary answer – Jesus came into this wicked, sin-loving world to suffer and to die. That’s why He came. Bethlehem only happened so Calvary could happen. He was born so He could grow up to be a man and die. He was born in order to die.
19. One preacher put it this way, “Those soft baby hands, fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb were made in order that nails might be driven through them. Those chubby feet, pink and unable to walk, were one day to walk a hill and be nailed to a cross. That sweet head with sparkling eyes and eager mouth was formed in order that some day men might crush into a crown of thorns. That tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes would one day be ripped open by a spear to reveal a broken heart and that’s exactly why God made that body. Jesus was born to die” (John MacArthur).
20. Our text this morning deals with the incarnation of Christ and His death. I have divided my exposition into three parts.

I. CHRIST CAME TO DIE AS OUR SUBSTITUTE (2:9).

1. This is one of the greatest themes of the Bible – Christ died as our substitute (2:9).
2. Some theologians and some professors and some preachers have tried to “limit” the atonement, but the Bible clearly says our Lord, “tasted death for every man” (2:9).
3. Some refer to the limited atonement theory as the doctrine of “particular redemption,” but this is not taught in the Bible.

4. “And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2).
5. The Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world. He died as our substitute. The apostle Paul said in Galatians 2:20, that Jesus “loved me, and gave Himself for me.”
6. Paul was saying Jesus died as his substitute.
7. Paul also said in Ephesians 5:25, that “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” The Lord is not only Paul’s substitute; He is our substitute. He died for the church.
8. Paul wrote in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
9. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3).
10. Furthermore, Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:15, “And that He died for all...” Therefore, the atonement is not “limited.”
11. It is limited only in the sense that those who do not believe cannot be saved. But they could be saved if only they would believe (cf. John 5:40).
12. The Lord Jesus Christ is the “captain of our salvation” (2:10).
13. But our Lord had to first die in order to be the captain of our salvation. And thus was He born to die.
14. Because of His great love, God sent His only begotten Son to come and bear the punishment we deserved and to die the death we deserved. This is why Jesus came. He came to be our substitute, and when He was nailed to the cross He died for you and He died for me.
15. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. God is holy and righteous and He has to judge sin.

16. On the other hand, God is loving and compassionate and He wants to forgive sin. Either God punishes you for your sin and me for my sin (that means eternal punishment in hell) or else God provides a substitute – someone else who will die in our place and pay our penalty.
17. That is exactly what Jesus came to do; He came to be our substitute. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21).
18. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Peter 2:24).
19. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Peter 3:18).
20. The sinless Son of God, God in the flesh, humbled Himself, and came to earth to die on the cruel cross for you and me.
21. He died, not because He deserved it, but because we deserved it and He was our substitute.

II. CHRIST WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS

1. Hebrews 2:9 says our Lord “was made for a little lower than the angels.” The Scofield Bible correctly points out that “for a little” refers to time. Christ was made for a little time lower than the angels.
2. This is part of His incarnation. We should understand that the Lord Jesus Christ, by His very essence and nature as God, is higher than the angels (cf. Heb. 1:8).
3. Hebrews 1:4 says, “Being made so much better than the angels...” After our Lord’s incarnation and crucifixion and resurrection and

ascension into heaven, He will not, and is not, and never will be again lower than the angels.

4. That was just for a little time, and that time has passed.
5. Christ was by nature better than angels. Referring to our Lord, God the Father said, "I will be to him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son" (1:5).
6. God never said that to any angels. God only said that to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, who was better than the angels. "And again, when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (1:6).
7. "Worship Him." Only God is to be worshipped. Our Lord said to the devil, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).
8. In Acts 10:25, 26 we read that "as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."
9. Men are not to be worshipped. We know from the Bible that there is a day coming when men will worship the antichrist.
10. Angels are not to be worshipped. Saints are not to be worshipped. Mary is not to be worshipped.
11. Only God is to be worshipped. And Jesus is to be worshipped because Jesus is God (Matt. 2:11; 8:1-3; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:1-6; Luke 24:51-53; John 9:38; 20:28; Rev. 5:1-14).
12. The Lord Jesus Christ is the creator of angels. Colossians 1:16 says, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him."

13. John 1:3 says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."
14. Christ is the head of the angels. He is the Lord of hosts, the One who is worshipped by the angels, and for a little time became lower than angels. For our sakes.
15. For rebellious, wicked, ungodly sinners who did not want God and did not know God. For our sakes Christ became lower than angels.
16. The Lord Jesus Christ was our perfect substitute because He is both God and man. Christ undertook a work that no angel could ever do.
17. To do this work, Christ, for a little while, had to become lower than angels. Higher than angels is God, and lower than angels are men. And Christ was at the same time higher than angels in His power, lower in than angels in His humiliation.
18. Therefore, He was our perfect substitute.

III. CHRIST WAS CROWNED WITH GLORY & HONOR (2:9).

1. Hebrews 2:9 says our Lord was crowned with glory and honor. When the Lord Jesus Christ finished His work on the cross, God the Father gave Him glory and honor.
2. Philippians 2:9-11 says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
3. Philippians 2:8 says that this is because our Lord "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

4. Our Lord “humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” and God exalted Him, and crowned Him with glory and honor.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ died for us as our substitute. And therefore God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every other name in the universe.
6. God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus Christ. God has “crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:9). And those who oppose the Lord Jesus Christ are in danger of the fierce judgment of God.

CONCLUSION:

1. The sodomites and the wicked Hollywood crowd are very upset that the voters in California have rejected so-called “gay marriage” (Prop. 8).
2. They have recently gotten together and have put out a video mocking Christians and even mocking the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Some foolish actor named Jack Black portrays Jesus in an irreverent and mocking way. Since God holds the Lord Jesus Christ in such high esteem – “crowned with glory and honour” –I would hate to be in Mr. Black’s shoes on Judgment Day.