

GOD HAS SPOKEN

Hebrews 1:1-3

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Intro: As the Christmas season approaches again, those of us who know and love the Lord are aware that each year less and less attention is paid to Christ, to His birth, to the singing of the old Christmas carols, and more attention is paid to that non-existent person people call Santa Claus, and the season itself becomes more secularized and more commercialized. Fewer and fewer people, including their children, know the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. And even those who know some of the details, have no idea as to Who Jesus Christ actually was, and is, or why He was born in Bethlehem, a child of the virgin Mary. It has become increasingly true that not only are there more homes in our country without a Bible, but it is not unusual to meet a person, particularly young people, who have never even seen a Bible. And so this means that they have never held a Bible in their hands. It is to be hoped that the Lord may be pleased to change this situation, especially since September 11, but it seems like people have gotten back to living very much like they were living before that terrible day – that is, living without the Bible, and without the God of the Bible, and without any true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the place to start with most people to educate them about Christ, would be to turn to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in particular, and read to them the Biblical accounts of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And from those passages we can learn a great deal about Who Jesus Christ is, and why it was that He came. Those of us whom God has blessed with an understanding of these great truths, know that there is nothing more important for anyone to learn than Who Christ is, and why it was that He came. It is in the Bible that we find the answers to these questions – Who is Jesus Christ? Why was He born?

Let me consider with you for a few minutes,

I. THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE.

As I have said, the two books of the Bible that give us the historical record of the birth of Christ are the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, especially the Gospel of Luke. The four Gospels taken together indicate for us

that the focal point of all of Scripture, of the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the birth, the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, plus His ascension back into heaven, and the promise of His return. The Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Christ; the books of the New Testament, following the Gospels, explain for us the meaning of Christ's coming and the far-reaching results of His coming as it applies to the lives of the people of God.

In the first chapter of the book of Hebrews we are told that God has been speaking for a long, long time. He has spoken through men. The men through whom He chose to speak are called prophets. God spoke at many different times and in many different ways. But the wonderful fact as far as we are concerned is that what He has said has been recorded for us in the Bible. The Apostle Peter said, referring especially to the OT (although the same applies to the NT), that "men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The NASB translates that statement this way: "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." However, in the verse before this one which I have just quoted from, you will see that Peter was talking about "Scripture." "Scripture" is a name that is given to the Bible, and it means *that which is written*. So what the prophets *spoke* was written down, and their message is preserved for us in our Bibles.

The Apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The statement means that the Scriptures are *God-breathed*. That expression alone may not mean very much to us until we understand that it means that, while men wrote the books of the Bible, yet the Holy Spirit guided the writers of Scripture in such a way that they were guided in the very words that they used so that we are absolutely right when we say that the Bible not only came to us from God, but that the Bible is the very Word of God. And God has miraculously preserved the Bible for us so that we have His message in the sixty-six books of the Bible.

The Bible is proof to us that God has spoken, spoken at many different times and in many different ways, and He has ordered the writing of all of the books of the Bible so that we will have a permanent record of what He has said, and what He has done. Prophets are mainly preachers, and the message that they have given us is God's message.

But as we move from the OT to the NT we learn from Hebrews 1:2 that

“in these last days,” the days which witness the birth and life of Jesus Christ, God has “spoken unto us by His Son.” So now let us consider:

II. GOD’S DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE IN HIS SON (Heb. 1:2).

God has a continuing message for us in His Son. This is not something different from God’s message in the OT because the OT speaks of God’s Son in many ways.

Many of you will remember that after our Lord had died and had been raised from the dead, He appeared to two of His disciples (not apostles) on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They were troubled by what had taken place in Jerusalem when the Lord was crucified, but equally “astonished” by the reports of His resurrection. Then the Lord said to them,

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

They went to report to the eleven apostles that they had seen the Lord. Shortly after that the Lord appeared to the eleven. After showing them His hands and His feet, and also after He ate before them to show that He had been raised from the dead, He said to the eleven:

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day (Luke 24:44-46).

So the OT spoke of the death and resurrection of Christ. At last those prophecies had been fulfilled, and the Son of God Who had been crucified, stood before them in His resurrection body.

Now the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews said that “God had spoken to them in His Son. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ was Himself a

message from God. But what was the message?

III. THE SON AS A MESSAGE FROM GOD (Heb. 2:1-4; 1:2-4).

I want to move on to chapter 2 in Hebrews for part of the answer, and then come back to the second verse of chapter 1 for the other part of the answer.

But before I get to that, I am sure that you noticed that from verse 4 on down to the end of chapter, the writer was comparing the Son of God with angels. Why angels?

Well, many of the Jews were in danger of practically worshiping angels because of the part that angels had in the giving of the Law. And they were inclined to feel that angels were greater than our Lord in the flesh because He was a Man, while they were angels of a higher order. So the writer of Hebrews was showing that they were not greater than the Son of God.

A. “So great salvation” (Heb. 2:2-3).

What was “the word spoken by angels”? The expression which follows, “every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,” that is, was punished, gives us a hint that “the word spoken by angels” was the Law, the Law given to Moses. And that is confirmed by Gal.3:19 where Paul said that the Law “was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Moses was the mediator, and Paul said that God gave the Law to Moses through angels.

Then we can add to that what Stephen said in his message about the Law. He told the Jews in Jerusalem that they “had received the Law by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53). He meant that angels were charged with giving the Law to Moses, but that it originally came from God.. Now this is one fact about the giving of the Law that was not mentioned in Exodus when Moses received the Law. But nevertheless it is true.

But what did the writer of the book of Hebrews contrast the Law with as we move from verse 2 to verse 3 in chapter 2? He contrasted it with the message of salvation, which he called, “so great salvation.” And who spoke of this “great salvation”? It was “spoken by the Lord, “ and then the writer of Hebrews said that it “was confirmed unto us by them that

heard Him.”

Now the writer did not mean that the Lord was the first one to preach the Gospel, but he did mean that the Lord was the One Who, because of His part in it, *spoke* of how He was the Savior, that He was the One Who had come in fulfillment of the promises of salvation that were given in the OT.

The Law could not save; it only condemned. But Christ came, He Himself being the message of salvation as well as the Savior. And by this the writer meant (because he was writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit), the only Savior, the complete Savior, the one bringing “so great salvation,” far greater than man could ever have planned or sought.

But there is a word of warning about all of this which is found in Heb. 2:1. (Read.) The NKJ gives a better translation: “lest we drift away.” The NASB renders it, “lest we drift away from it.” The idea is: once you have heard this message in Christ Himself, as one of the two major reasons for His coming, don’t ever depart from it. Christ is not one of many Saviors. Nor did He do just part of the work of salvation, leaving the remainder for us to do. He and He alone saves, and saves completely all who come to God through Him.

That is the message that we have in Christ. So when we talk about the birth of Christ, we need to be talking about salvation. That is the message that we have in the birth of Christ. This is what the angel of the Lord told Joseph who was engaged to Mary after he found that Mary was already expecting a child. He could only conclude that she had been unfaithful to him. This is what the angel of the Lord said:

20b . . . Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.
21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:20b-21).

So if people really understand the message of the birth of Christ, they ought to be talking about salvation, salvation from sin.

But now let us go back to chapter 1 in Hebrews, looking especially at verses 2 through 4. This is the other part of God’s message to the world in the birth of Christ. And I call your attention to the words:

B. “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person” (Heb. 1:2-4).

Remember we are thinking about the message that God has given “in these last days.” “Who” is “the brightness of” whose “glory,” and who is “the express image” of whose “Person.” *God has spoken about His Son, and this is what He has had to say.* Christ is the brightness of God’s glory, and Christ is the express image of God’s Person.

All through the OT we learn many wonderful and awesome things about God. We learn that He is eternal. He has no beginning, and no ending. We learn about His goodness, His mercy, His holiness and righteousness, His wisdom and His power. And I could go on and on talking about how glorious God is. This is what theology is. It is the revelation of God. One of the primary reasons for the writing of the OT, a major purpose of the OT, is to tell us about God. But as wonderful as all of that is, and if we could gather together in one place all of the glorious truths that we can learn about God in the OT, the picture, as amazing as it is, is not complete. It was not until Christ came that God finally revealed all that He intends for us to know about Himself, and all that we are capable of knowing here and now. In Christ we have God’s message, the picture that God has given us of what He, God, is like.

What do these two expressions mean – “the brightness of” God’s “glory, and . . . the express image of His Person”?

The NASB translates these important words in this way: “He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.”

The Lord defined the first statement that He was the brightness of God’s glory when He said the words we find in John 12:45, “And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me.” That is like His words to Philip found in John 14:9, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” God’s glory is what God is, and all of the glory that we would have seen if God the Father had come in the flesh, we see in Christ. Theologians like the word, *effulgence* – *the effulgence of God’s glory*. If we could see God, we would not see anything that we can’t see in Christ.

“The express image of His Person” is just saying the same as the previous expression, but it confirms and underlines the first expression. We can say that Christ is an exact reproduction of God. The coming of Christ

into the world supports all that we learn about God in the OT, but it completes the picture that God wants us to have of Himself.

The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was truly human, born of Mary. But He lost none of His divine attributes in becoming Man. He may not have exercised them all, but He had all of them. So when we commemorate the birth of Christ, we need to be thinking not just of His humanity, but also of His Deity, and His total likeness to His Father Who sent Him into the world.

Concl: The Bible makes it very clear that God has been speaking from the beginning of time. While man never seeks God, yet God seeks us. His message is given over and over again in His Word. We have it in part in the OT; we have it completed in the NT. And if we have really heard what God was saying when He sent His Son into the world, then when we commemorate the birth of Christ, we should seek to know Him as well as we can because that is how we grow in the knowledge of God. And let us remember at this Christmas season that Christ came into the world to save sinners. And therefore our thought should be directed toward this salvation which we have in Christ, only in Christ, and all in Christ.

Have you heard the message? Has the Spirit of God impressed these truths upon your heart, that Christ came as the final and full revelation of His Father, and He came to save sinners. If you have heard the message, you will worship Christ as you worship God, and you will come to Christ because the message means that salvation can be found in no other.

God has spoken. If you have not heard, ask Him to give you ears to hear, and a heart to respond to the message. It is a dangerous thing to turn from the truth of the Word because God tells us in His Word that those who reject the Word. To turn from the truth means that you "shall be turned unto fables," myths, gods who don't even exist. And that verb, "shall be turned" is a future passive, meaning that when you reject the truth, you are putting yourself in the hands of the Devil who will be glad to see to it that you are doomed eternally. What a story those terrorists could tell if they could come back and tell us where they are going to spend eternity. They knew the moment those planes blew up that they had a one way ticket to hell. Allah can't save. He doesn't even exist. But I am afraid that many Americans who have no time to listen to the Gospel of Christ will turn to the Moslem religion only to learn too late that they have shut themselves out from heaven forever. There is no salvation but in Christ. I trust that you know that He is your Savior.