

Hebrews 2:2-9

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Christmas Visitation

For most families the Christmas season involves not only the busy schedule of shopping for gifts but the careful planning of visits to all those family members and friends that mean so much to us. How interesting that both gifts and visitation were a part of that first Christmas. The theme of gift giving at Christmas time is easily related to the first Christmas when God sent his Son into the world as a gift of His love. The Bible also speaks of this coming of Christ as a matter of visitation: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Hebrews 2:6) It is important to realize however that the word here translated visit means far more than dropping in to say hello. This word visit (episkeptomai) means to look upon in order to help. God's gift of love was more than an expression of identity with humanity as God became flesh, it was the action of a loving God in dealing with man's problem of sin. God helped man by doing what man could not do himself, pay the penalty of sin through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Scripture boldly declares: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

As much as the real meaning of Christmas Visitation is incomplete without the Cross of Easter, so is the Christian life (which begins by appropriating the finished work of the cross through faith - Ephesians 2:8) incomplete without visitation. James stated this truth this way: "this a pure and undefiled religious in the sight of God our Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27) Visitation in the same sense of "looking upon to help" is part of what defines the Christian life. True saving faith results in the inward change of heart that drives a believer to deny self for the benefit and spiritual welfare of others. The transforming power of the gospel manifests itself in the believers social and personal ethics. Here is seen as "Sympathy with suffering" and "separation from sin".

As the rush of gift buying and visit planning rushes upon us this year, may I encourage each reader to take a moment and reflect upon the real "Visitation of Christmas". Has the Son of God "visited" you personally in dealing with sin, is your faith in the cross where Christ met that need through His death? Having come to know Christ as saviour, are you involved in true visitation? Why not take time this season and truly "visit" by helping a family in need through contributing to the Manna Food bank, or by some other meaningful expression of sacrifice to demonstrate your life changing faith? Wouldn't the world be a different place if every confessing Christian made the Christmas themes of gifts and visitation a year round expression of their original meaning?

What is my response:
