



“Is God Still Speaking to Man?”

Kevin Presley

A lot of people say that God speaks to them. You certainly don't have to look far to find a preacher who will claim that the Lord gave him some kind of message. But does God speak to man today? For that matter, has God spoken to any of us at all? I invite your attention to the book of **Hebrews** for our text.

Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”

Those verses establish at least two important facts: 1) God HAS spoken to man 2) God spoke using human messengers to relay what He said. That's what we want to learn about today. What kind of message does God have for mankind? How was that message sent to earth? Is God still speaking today?

Arthur Pink once suggested the following scenario: What if an angel from heaven was dispatched to earth to appear to mankind, and let's say it was announced that he was bringing an important message from God to be delivered in some large auditorium and broadcast on live television and the internet, as well as transcribed in the morning newspaper. If nothing else, at least out of curiosity you'd have to admit that most people would want to know what he had to say. I'm sure that the television ratings would shatter any standing records and the newspapers would fly off the racks the next morning. People would throng to see such a sight and hear this angel speak in person, if possible. I'm sure people would hang on every word, and the speech would be relayed and reprinted over and over again. It would be the talk of the country--in fact, the talk of the world.

Yet, God HAS spoken to man, and the message He sent barely receives a passing shrug from the average person, unfortunately. Paul declared that God has spoken in our text passage, **Hebrews 1:1**. The deist says that God wound the world up like a clock and is letting it all run down; that He created, then essentially just walked away, having no concern or involvement in human affairs. But, if God made man

in His own image, as the Bible declares that He did, and has any concern for him or has any involvement in his life, that would necessitate a revelation of some kind from God to man. How would we know anything about such a God, much less have any kind of relationship with Him if He never spoke to man, but instead remained enshrouded in eternal mystery and sat silently through the ages? Some might say, *well, I see and communicate with God through nature*. Some do make that claim. It is very true that God communicates His presence and His power through nature. But that is not how He communicates His will for man. The *book of nature*, if you want to call it that, is what we would call *God's natural revelation*.

Psalm 19:1-3 “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.”

Those wonderful and poetic words are David's way of saying that the sun, moon and stars are all celestial preachers that travel around the earth, shouting in every language known to man that there is a God! I never cease to be amazed at how supposedly intelligent men can behold the beauty, power, precision and order of the world and the universe beyond, and say that there is no intelligence behind it, no designer behind its design...that there is no God. The Bible has something to say about that.

Psalms 14:1 “The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God..."

I've never been to a watch factory, but I know they exist because I have a watch. I've never seen the wind, but I know it exists because I see and feel the effects of it. In the same way, I have never discerned God with my physical sense: I've never seen, heard or touched God. But I know that there is an intelligent creator because I see His creation, and I no more believe that the universe resulted from chaos and chance any more than I believe that an automobile is the result of a tornado going through a junkyard. Or that parts of my watch randomly came together in just the right way, in just the right moment, and *somehow* I have a watch that tells the exact hour, minute and second—and is even waterproof.

Every time that we take time to marvel at the beauty of the earth, we see the fingerprints of an omniscient and omnipotent God. But though we come to the obvious conclusion that there is a God, we don't know His will by merely looking at a mountain or gazing at a star; we just know that there's a creator, and we yearn to know that creator. But knowing that creator necessitates not merely a natural revelation of Him (or a revelation of Him in the natural world); it necessitates a supernatural revelation of His mind and His will.

In **Romans 1**, Paul speaks about the Gentiles of old as being *without excuse* for their unbelief, because the evidence of God's existence and His power are clearly seen in the things that are made.

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,”

However, these same people lived in spiritual darkness because God did not reveal His mind or His will unto them at that time. They were without the law of God, since God made Himself known only to the Jews, His chosen race, in that age.

In the same way, no man can know the mind of God until God reveals it to him. So, we not only need the natural revelation of His creation, but we also need the supernatural revelation of the Creator's mind and will. Friend, that is what the Bible is about. That's the purpose of the Bible. Did you know that the purpose of the Bible is NOT to prove that God exists? That's not its purpose at all. The Bible is written to people who already believe that God exists based upon natural revelation. The Bible is God's supernatural revelation to man, that makes known the mind, character and will of the heavenly Father. To further explain, let's look at Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

I Corinthians 2:7-16 "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

We're going to start in **verse 14** and work our way backwards.

I Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

In one sense, you could say that a *natural man* would be a man who acquires his knowledge by natural means. For example, a scientist functioning only as a scientist is a *natural man*; he draws conclusions based upon what he observes in the natural world. A geologist studies rocks and minerals. He may carefully study the rocks and formations that make up the earth, and draw many conclusions about the earth and what it's made up of and he may assume how old it is. The chemist studies the chemical composition of things, and the astronomer focuses his telescope off in the heavens and studies things that lie beyond this globe. He peers into his telescope and observes the planets and the stars, and he acquires a great deal of knowledge through his study, no doubt. Perhaps if he's wise, he reaches the same conclusion that David did: that there must be a God, a higher power, for something so wonderful and filled with such order and design to come to be.

But even if he reaches that conclusion, none of these men can know the mind of God through such channels of knowledge. In fact, the things of God are *foolishness* to these men who rely upon such knowledge. Those things are not naturally received, rather God made them known through a supernatural process called *revelation* and *inspiration*. Now, look back at **verse 11**.

I Corinthians 2:11 " For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."

Paul is simply saying that one cannot know the mind of another until the other person articulates his thoughts in word or deed. In the same way, God's thoughts had to be articulated unto man. You can't know the mind of God by staring into a crystal or sitting on a mountaintop somewhere peering off into the sky or sitting on a creekbank listening to the murmuring brook. We only know as much as God has chosen to reveal to us. That helps us to understand what Paul means in **verses 9 and 10**.

I Corinthians 2:9-10 "But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

Some people think **verse 9** refers to heaven. In other words, that no man has ever seen heaven or is able to know or tell about what it will be like one of these days. That's not what Paul is talking about at all. In fact, the apostle Paul tells about a time when he was *caught up into the third heaven* himself. He is referring to the plan of redemption: the things that were in the mind of God, that God had prepared from before the foundation of the world itself, for the salvation of man. And God's plan for man had not aforesaid been revealed; that is, before the coming of Christ and His apostles. Not until the Holy Spirit brought it to earth when He clothed the apostles with inspiration and confirming demonstrative power. Paul says *NOW those things are known*. How? He says that *God revealed them to us through His Spirit*. The antecedent of *us* here refers to *Paul and the other apostles*. He goes on:

I Corinthians 2:13 "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Don't get the idea that this is some kind of 'better felt than told' experiential type of thing that you really can't describe, that God's Spirit just somehow illumines your heart and you somehow know the will of God...No, Paul isn't saying anything of the sort in this chapter. He's talking about the very logical, rational process of God revealing His mind and His will for man by the means of the Holy Spirit which He imparted to His apostles, who inspired them with the words that they needed to communicate the mind and the will of God to the rest of us. Not only did God reveal Himself to *them*, the apostles, but Paul says that himself and the other apostles now *speak those things using the very words that the Holy Spirit furnished and superintended*.

Because God has spoken to them, we can all know and understand the will of God by the testimony that they left behind. By reading what they wrote down by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul says this:

II Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Let's go back to the passage in **Corinthians**.

I Corinthians 2:15-16 "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

The *spiritual man* to which Paul refers here is not you or me or someone who just feels like they somehow have some abstract operation of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he is referring to *the apostles*, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Their teachings were and are not subject to the approval/disapproval of

anyone else because they were the words of God Himself, communicated through His Spirit. Paul affirms that he and the other apostles *possess the mind of Jesus Christ*. In other words, God spoke to the rest of us through them, and those men are not subject to the judgments of other men. We are subject to the judgment of God according to the standard of His word, but the words spoken by those men came by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are God's words. In fact, to be very specific, they are the words of Jesus Christ Himself.

II Corinthians 13:3 “since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me...”

The things that God inspired Paul and the other apostles to write two thousand years ago were collected, canonized into what we now know as the New Testament scriptures that have been preserved and translated throughout the ages for us to have, read, study, obey and know as the will of God.

Let's go back to our text verses.

Hebrews 1:1-2 “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”

This passage refers to the gradual process which God used beginning a long time ago to reveal Himself to man. God used different men and different methods to make Himself known. One thing we can conclude from that is that God does NOT individually speak to all people. He never has. God has always used certain ones, through whom to make His will known to the rest. Paul says here that first, God spoke *in diverse manners* or *different ways*. God manifested Himself and His plan in a multitude of ways throughout the developmental age of mankind. Here are a few examples:

*He first spoke directly to the patriarchs. Those men functioned essentially as the priests for their families, and God would speak to the families through the *patriarchs* or *fathers* of the families.

*God later inspired His prophets of old with certain messages to be relayed to His people. Moses, of course, was the great lawgiver. There was a string of prophets after Moses, through whom God spoke to the people of Israel.

*God prefigured and foreshadowed His plan of redemption in the various types, shadows, symbols and ceremonies of the Old Testament dispensation. He manifested Himself to the world not only through His creation, but also through the nation of Israel and His covenant with them. All of that was merely a precursor—a build-up, you might say—to the final revelation of God's plan for the entire human family. Paul said *in these last days, God has spoken unto us by His Son*. The message that Jesus Christ was and brought to earth was God's final and ultimate message to mankind. That's why Paul finishes that verse by saying that *Christ is the heir of all things*. He is the very fulfillment of all of the things spoken afore.

Hebrews 2:3-4 “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?”

You see, the full revelation of Jesus Christ--the gospel of salvation through and by Him—that is God's message for the ages. It was *first spoken by Jesus Christ*, then he says it was *confirmed unto us by them*

that heard Him. That refers to the apostles, who were eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection. They were with the Lord, not only during His ministry, but also after His resurrection, and that namely was the qualification to be an apostle and that's how the apostle Paul later became such because he saw the Lord on the Damascus road after He was risen. Because these men were eyewitnesses of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because they were with Him and heard Him and could testify to the fact that He was alive and is therefore Lord and Christ and everything that God declared Him to be and that He Himself claimed to be—all of those reasons gave the word of those men authority. You've heard the expression "signed, sealed and delivered;" so was the message of God. It was signed by God, it was sealed by the work of the Holy Spirit in the first century, and it was delivered by the mouths of the apostles, and consequently their pens.

That is so very important for us to understand. You see, the apostles occupied a very unique role in the revelation of God's message that no men today or any other men of any other age occupy. The problem is that a lot of people today believe that God STILL speaks to them just like He spoke to the apostles of the first century. It's not uncommon to hear preachers today say that the Lord gave them a message. Oral Roberts, a number of years ago, claimed that the Lord was sending us all a message through him and that message was that if we didn't send him so many millions of dollars, the Lord was going to take his life. Do you remember that? Did you believe that the Lord really said that to Oral Roberts? My question is, why should we believe that? The apostles had the credentials of their divine office to prove that God was speaking through them. Preachers today don't carry those credentials! Anybody can make the claim that God said something to them, and many people do. But how are we supposed to know whether He did or didn't? What is their proof? What divine credentials do they have to prove that God really spoke to them, and that we therefore should give credence to what they are saying? Friend, as goes the claim, so goes the demonstration. *God bore THEM witness with many miracles and signs* and so forth.

Someone says, *well, we reject whatever they say that is not in harmony with the Bible; we test it by the Bible.* But, friend, think that through. If God spoke to us through the apostles who wrote the New Testament, and men today can only speak those things written in the New Testament, why would God need to speak to them today? Don't we already have it then in the form of the scriptures? Jude answered that question for us:

Jude 3 "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Greek scholars tell us that the word translated *once* should actually be translated *once for all* or *once for all time*. That makes it a lot more simple, doesn't it? I don't have to be confused by the conflicting claims of these people who say that the Lord speaks to them; Jude tells me that the *faith—the body of truth of Jesus Christ*—was delivered *once and for all time* when it was revealed to His apostles. Let's listen to it and heed it.

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