



“A Message from Heaven”

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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 a message to relay to you. But does God really speak to men today? For that matter, has God spoken to any of us at all? The deist asserts that God created the world and is no longer involved in its affairs. The character and mind of God, therefore, is unknown to us and He simply left the world to itself. But God is very much involved in the affairs of His creation and He HAS spoken to His creation.

Scientists have spent the last several decades and untold billions of dollars trying to detect some communication or some faint message from some far supposed civilization in some unknown corner of the universe. Were they to ever detect such a message, they would listen intently and with great interest and do all that they could to decipher and decode it. Yet, they are mostly oblivious to the message received a long, long time ago from afar.

I want to begin our study today by looking at a couple of passages in the book of **Hebrews**.

Hebrews 1:1-3 “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; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”

Hebrews 2:1-4 “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward (referring to the former revelation that came in the old dispensation), how shall we escape (in this dispensation) 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?"

These verses establish at least two important facts: 1) God has spoken to man. 2) God spoke using human beings to relay that message. That's what we want to learn about today. What kind of message does God have for us? How was it sent to us? How do we receive it? And is God still speaking? Bible scholar and author Arthur Pink once suggested the following scenario. What if an angel from heaven was dispatched to earth to appear to mankind and it was announced that he was bringing an important message from God? Suppose it was announced that this angel was going to deliver this message in some large venue and that it was going to be broadcast on live television and transcribed in the newspaper. You know, at least out of curiosity, most people would want to know what this was all about. I'm sure television ratings would shatter any records. Social media would be saturated. Newspapers would fly off the rack. People would throng to see such a sight and hear this angel speak, if possible. I'm sure people would hang on every word and the speech would be replayed and reprinted over and over again. It would be the talk of the country and the world, at least for a time.

Yet, God HAS spoken to man and the message He sent seems to barely receive a passing shrug from the average person. OR it is viewed with disdain and contempt. The **Hebrew** writer declared in **chapter 1** that God has spoken, and you would expect that He would. If God made man and has any concern for him and any involvement in his life, that would necessitate a revelation of that 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 shrouded in eternal mystery, sitting silently through the ages?

The fact is, God HAS revealed Himself to us.

Psalms 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."

This beautiful poetry is David's way of saying that the sun, moon, and stars are all celestial evangelists that travel around this earth 24 hours a day shouting in every language known to mankind that God exists.

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

So, when a wise man beholds the beauty and glory of not only the heavens above but even the earth below, as the old song says, *Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee. How great thou art!* But though I come to the obvious conclusion that God exists, and I may understand something about His awesomeness and His power from the evidence of those things He has made, the fact is that I don't know His will by looking at a mountain, gazing at a star, or listening to a babbling brook.

In **Romans 1**, Paul said that the Gentiles of old were without excuse for their unbelief because the evidence of God's existence and power are clearly seen in the things that He created. However, those same people lived in spiritual darkness because God did not reveal His mind or will unto them. They were without the law of God since God made Himself known only to His chosen race, the Jews, at that time. He made Himself known to them by means of special and supernatural revelation. In other words, He spoke to the Jewish people by their prophets in the Old Testament dispensation. In turn, Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles in darkness.

God has spoken to us today. He has spoken to the church today. He has revealed His mind and His purpose and His ultimate will through His Son, Jesus Christ, as we read earlier.

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;”

Jesus is the expression of God and the word that Christ brought to earth is the revelation of the mind and will of God. The mind of God cannot be known in any other way than through this special channel of revelation that God chose.

I Corinthians 2:9 “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.”

This doesn't refer to heaven and the future life, but rather to the things pertaining to the redemptive plan of God, the salvation of man. Those things, for a time, were a mystery and were hidden from man during that preparatory period of time throughout the former dispensations until the stage was set. Certain things had occurred, and God deemed it time to reveal it unto mankind.

I Corinthians 2:10-11 “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.”

This means that a person's thoughts cannot be known to others until that man chooses to express those thoughts. We understand that. Until that man speaks what is on his mind, what's in his mind is a mystery to us. The same is true of God. God's thoughts must be expressed for us to know them, and He expresses Himself in the same way we express ourselves to one another: through words.

I Corinthians 2:12 “Now we (Paul and the other apostles) 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.”

That is, the Holy Spirit revealed these things, the plan of God, to the apostles by divine revelation.

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.”

See there? The things God revealed to the apostles He made known to others by inspiring the apostles with the right words to infallibly express the mind of God, which had been revealed to them. In other words, God directly revealed unto them His will and the apostles, by inspiration, relayed that will unto us. They passed along the message. That makes them God's messengers.

Friend, God's message does not come through feelings, intuitions, hunches, and so forth. God's message is expressed in the form of words given to the apostles by the Spirit of God.

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.”

Keep in mind the context here. Paul is contrasting the wisdom of God with the wisdom of the world. If you read back in **chapter 1** you will see that. Therefore, the *natural man* is the man who relies on human wisdom to inform and guide him. He cannot be guided spiritually by human wisdom. Man today cannot be guided by human wisdom. The philosophy of this world will not enlighten you to the mind of God and will not lead you to God or to heaven. A man cannot be guided spiritually by the wisdom of man. BUT, the apostles were *spiritual men* because they were not speaking according to the wisdom of men; they were speaking by the Spirit of God. Paul is assuring the Corinthians, who were attracted to the worldly wisdom of their culture, that truth wasn't found there. Rather, it was found in the teaching of the apostles because God had expressed His plan and His will unto the apostles through the Holy Spirit within their hearts. Today, those words the apostles wrote and left for us still constitute the mind of Christ.

I Corinthians 2:15 "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one."

Here, Paul is affirming the apostles' authority by virtue of the fact that they were apostles and inspired of the Holy Spirit. Their teachings were not subject to the world's standard of wisdom or the world's approval. Rather, the apostles of Christ are the ones in whom the authority of God resides because they are *spiritual men*—men inspired or led by the Holy Spirit, and God's message to us comes through them and not through worldly channels of knowledge.

I Corinthians 2:16 "For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we (the apostles) have the mind of Christ."

You see, God is not speaking through you or me. God spoke through those men who were and are the foundation of the church (**Ephesians 2:20**). Those *spiritual men*, the apostles (including Paul), whom Christ the King chose in place as His ambassadors.

Now let's go back to 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..."

This refers to the gradual process that God used beginning with the creation to reveal Himself to man. God used different men and 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. There has never been a time when God individually spoke to all people. He has always used certain designated ones through whom to make His will known to all. Paul says that God spoke in various ways in history. For example, God spoke directly to the patriarchs. It was through the head of the family that God dealt with the members of that family. He didn't deal with individual members of that family. He dealt with the patriarch.

He later inspired His prophets of old with the messages He wished to reveal to His nation, His people at that time, the Jews. God manifested Himself to the world not only through His creation but through the nation of Israel and His covenant with them. All of that was merely a prerequisite to the final full revelation of God's plan to the entire human race. Old time preachers used to refer to the patriarchal dispensation as the 'twilight age,' then you move into the Jewish age or 'moonlight period,' but when you step into the age of Christ and the New Testament, you have the 'sunlight age.'

The **Hebrew** writer says that though God spoke at different times in the past through the prophets pointing forward to what was to be, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. In other words, the message that Jesus Christ brought to earth was God's full, final, and ultimate message unto mankind. It's all in Jesus. He is the heir of all things. God's message to man is Jesus Himself and the plan of redemption through Him.

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?"

Jesus and the New Testament that God established with man through Christ is God's ultimate and final message for the ages. There is no message to come. It is God's final message to mankind. All spiritual blessings, including salvation, are found in and through that message. Paul says that that message was first spoken by Christ and was confirmed to us by them that heard Him. That is talking about the apostles, who were witnesses of Jesus Christ after His resurrection. You've heard the expression *signed, sealed, and delivered*? Well, the message of God was signed God, sealed by the work of the Holy Spirit in the first century, and delivered by the mouths of the apostles. That's incredibly important for us to understand. The apostles occupied a very unique role in the revelation of God's message that no people today or any other men in that 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 say that the Lord gave them a message. Oral Roberts claimed that the Lord was sending us all a message through him several years ago 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 believe the Lord really said that to Oral Roberts? 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, but how are we supposed to know whether or not God actually spoke to them? Are we to just take their word for it? What is their proof?

I John 4:1 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

What divine credentials do people have to prove that God spoke to them and that we should give credence to what they are saying? Someone may say, *We reject whatever they say that's not in harmony with the Bible*. Friend, have you ever stopped to think about how contradictory that is? If God spoke to us through the apostles who wrote the New Testament, and men today can only speak those things contained in the scriptures and no more, then why would God need to speak to those men today directly? Don't we already have it 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 translated word *once* should be translated *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 all the people who

say that the Lord is speaking to them. Jude tells me that the faith was delivered *once for all time* when it was revealed to and delivered through the apostles.

It's also tempting to refer to preachers today as "God's messengers." A lot of people tell the preacher, "I appreciate your message." Granted, in one sense, a message can refer to a thought that one conveys to another. I understand that. But that's not how the Bible uses the term. In the primary sense, I am not the Lord's messenger. That may sound startling to you, but I am not, and neither is your preacher. Nor is any other preacher. I don't have a personal message from the Lord and neither do they.

Don't misunderstand me. The Lord has a message for you and for me, which I and others preach, but that message is not mine. The Lord did not give it to me directly to pass on to you. The message which is to be preached is simply what is in the Bible. The word of God. If I preach anything that didn't come from there, I can promise you it's not a message from the Lord. I don't preach my message, some message, a message...I preach THE message. And that message came a long time ago.

God's message to man came to the apostles. It was authenticated or confirmed by the miracles of the first century and that message has been preserved for us in nothing more and nothing less than the Holy Bible. It is God's message to man. I preach that message, but I have no message of my own. Any other man who claims to have such a message is claiming something he has no right to claim.

God has a message for you. Did you realize that? God has spoken to you and me. That message from heaven has to do with your redemption and my redemption. The will of God for our lives. Some people say, *I just want to know what God's will for me is. I just want to know what God wants me to do and which direction God wants me to go. I want to know which church God wants me to go to. I want to know how God expects me to obey Him, how I can please God.* They wait for a sign, vision, dream, or feeling. For some sort of intuition that they believe is God leading them, guiding them, or speaking to them. That's not where God's message comes from. God's message comes from His word. If you want to hear from God, open His word. Search the scriptures.

John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

II Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

That happened through the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. That word *profitable* means that *it is able to do what it was sent forth to do*. If you want to hear from God, open His word. The question is, are you listening to Him? Are you obeying that message? Don't expect another. Believe and obey the one already given.

Friend, if you are groping in the darkness of this life, if you sense that void in your life and you know that you need the Lord Jesus Christ, you know there is something missing and that you are guilty before God and you are searching for the answer to that, God has spoken to you. He spoke to you through the men that He sent forth to this world after His ascension back to heaven to reconcile the world back to God through Him.

Mark 16:15-16 "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

That's where it begins. That's God's message to you. Would you believe it? Would you believe in His Son, repent of your sins, confess His name, and be baptized? That's God's message. I hope you'll heed it today.

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