



The Why and How of God's Word (Pt 3)

BY: Chris Harper

Friends, God chooses to speak to us primarily through His word. And much more than that – God has spoken to us, to all of history, and His medium has been His “living and active” word (Heb 4:13). God, by His spirit, is speaking to us from His word. Someone will always ask me, “Pastor, when was the last time God spoke to you?” Inevitably my answer is always the same, “God spoke to me this morning from when He spoke to me from His word.”

Now, so no one's charismatic sensitivities are offended – do not hear me say that God can't or won't speak to individuals be it by bush, vision, or audibly – God can! God can, and has, spoken audibly, using bushes, using prophets - but, in 4,000+ years of history, biblical history, God speaking in the bush, or by visions, or even out loud has always been the exception! Never was it ordinary – certainly not as ordinary as we claim it to be now.

I tell you brother and sisters, outside the Bible we are fallible – but inside – inside the Bible we have a rock solid, dependable truth.

I tell you truly: we do not need burning bushes, visions, prophets or an audible voice in the wilderness because God has given us His word and it is from His word that He chooses to speak. And He will speak to you if you would only read His word.

For someone to claim that the Holy God of the universe spoke to them – absent His word, be it by bush or by voice – this is not only an audacious claim but it is a very dangerous claim! It is the sort of claim that carries great power and because of its power, it can carry serious

Upcoming events



Monday, 2/2

Spring Sports Registration Begins

Friday, 2/6

B JV/V @ Trinity Lutheran, 6 p.m.

Thursday, 2/12

B JV/V vs. Shawe, 6 p.m.

Friday, 2/13

G V Sectional vs. TBD @ South Central, 6 p.m.

consequence! The Bible says if you are wrong, if you are confused, if your "word" is not really from God, then you should be put to death (Det 13:5, 18:20) for claiming it was!

That's why I confidently reiterate John Piper when he says, "Friends, the word in the Bible is more-sure than anything we hear outside the Bible."

This is the very reason the Apostle Paul tells us, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that what I write to you is the Lord's command. But if anyone ignores this, he will be ignored" (1 Cor. 14:37-38). Paul is speaking to anyone who calls themselves a prophet, he is speaking to anyone who claims that they have a message from God. Paul says call yourself spiritual – that's fine – call yourself a prophet – say that you are in tune with God – but if anything you say does not agree, correspond, or originate in scripture then you should not be recognized, you should be ignored. And I tell you, there are a lot of folks we should be ignoring today!

Even worse, if our word, or vision, or voice that we hear produces a different Gospel

than the one taught God's word, much like the "word" many of our false religions and prophets receive today – Paul says anyone preaching this "word" shall be cursed (Gal 1:8).

I tell you brothers and sisters, outside the Bible we are fallible – but inside – inside the Bible we have a rock solid, dependable truth. No twists, no perversions, no error; only the unchanging word of God. We would be fools if we continually strive, and wait for, sustenance outside of the Bible when inside the Bible there are provisions that we have barley even tasted - let alone digested! In my 33 years I have never heard God speak audibly to me – why should He? There is so much of Him in His word I have yet to discover.

Having said all that, I do not see anything in the Bible that would say God can't communicate with us in extraordinary ways. So I tell you if that ever happens, or you think it happened, or you receive a "word" – I say to you what Paul said, "Test it." Test what you have heard by God's "live and active" word. Like Paul said, "do not despise all prophecies, but test them, test

all things..." There is assurance and there is truthfulness that comes from testing. So I tell you, test all things, and hold fast to what is good.

Some of you read what I have written, and you are troubled. You long to believe I am wrong because you crave sensation. You crave the sensation of a voice, of a sign, you want the burning bush so you can "feel" validated.

I say to you brothers and sisters, "beware" - Jesus warned against those who seek a sign. Jesus, God incarnate, speaking to the Pharisees, telling them the truths they desperately needed to hear – the Pharisees listened and then they responded, "Give us a sign."

They said, "Give us a sign" – but what they meant was, "you Jesus, you Son of God, you are not enough, you are not adequate..."

The Pharisees craved something more. They needed to feel more, they wanted to touch more, and they desired to see more. Sadly, many of us, many churches, are in the same situation today. Today, we, who have God's entire revelation, His entire word, we

who have all four gospels before us, we still crave something more? Today we hear more from God than anyone did in Jesus' day because we have all four gospels before us and His spirit in us - who are we to demand, want, crave anything more than that?

I tell you surely, God is speaking to you, simply read His word and listen. Read His word and listening, do not be like the Pharisees, do not cry out like the Pharisees, "give

me a sign" - you do not need a sign, you do not need a voice in the wilderness, you do not need a burning bush or a light to appear where you are walking - you do not need anything because you have His word before you and His Spirit in you.

Read and listen. Position your heart to be like that of Paul. Paul speaking to the Ephesians elders taught them how they should pray and seek God. Let our prayer be like theirs,

"God of our Lord Jesus Christ, glorious Father, give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you. Father, I pray that the perception of my mind may be enlightened so that I may know the hope of His calling... So that I may know His power, His immeasurable riches, His greatness, His strength..." (Eph 1:17) - Let this be your prayer.

Be well,

C. Harper