

God Spoke!

Hebrews 1:1-2

Pastor Jim Rademaker

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ...

God spoke. Do you know how amazing that is! Think about that for a minute. God spoke. Why would He do that? Why would He bother? What would motivate Him to speak? Did God need something? Was there something He wanted to tell us? Of course, that's it. God spoke in order to tell us something; to tell *you* something.

How does God speak? Have you ever heard Him? Some people have. Not many, but some. How does God speak? And what does He have to say? In the past, way back in the past, God spoke through people called prophets. He spoke to them and they in turn spoke to the rest of the people to tell them what God said; what God wanted them to know. In the past, God spoke *to* the prophets and *through* the prophets at many times and in various ways.

He spoke through Moses, the greatest of them all. He spoke to Samuel, to Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and all the other mighty names down to Malachi. The Old Testament, is no less than, the voice of God Himself, speaking to those fathers of our faith who went before us. God spoke. And He continues to speak. You can hear Him every time you read from the Old Testament. What you're hearing, is God speaking to you. What's He saying to you? "Come back." "Come back *to Me*." "Return to Me." "Repent and come back". "I forgive you." "Trust Me". "Follow Me."

Why does God speak to us? God speaks to us because He cares. If you didn't care, why would He speak to us? Won't He rather just judge us? Find us guilty and punish us? Send us where we belong, to hell?

We've rebelled against Him. We're ungodly by nature, as God speaks to us and tells us through His mouthpiece Isaiah, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way ...*" We've made ourselves into gods. We look to ourselves. We trust in ourselves. We serve ourselves. We worship ourselves, instead of God. If God didn't care, why would He bother speaking to us? Wouldn't He just give us what we've got coming? What we deserve? What we've earned?

But God speaks to us, because He cares. And He was something to tell us we'd never dream of; something we would never expect. God has got Good News for us! News about One who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; was pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities, bringing us peace. Peace with God.

In the past, to our forefathers in the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets, to call us back; back to Him. He spoke through Moses, as he lifted his staff and the waters parted and God saved His people, freeing them from captivity in Egypt. He spoke through the Ten Commandments, showing us our sin and our need of a Savior. He spoke through the tabernacle and the priests and the sacrifices, calling us back to Him; providing a way for us to come to Him.

But in the Old Testament, God spoke to us as of a seed, a bud, a shoot. He spoke in anticipation. He spoke of something yet to come. It's as if He were speaking in rhymes and riddles; words shadowed in mystery. The temple, with its priests and sacrifices and rules and regulations, was but a shadow. A shadow of a reality that was yet to come.

Luke 24:15 *While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?"*

And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." (Luke 24:15-24)

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

And so, following Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven, the Good News of our salvation in Jesus spread far and wide. Among the first to hear and belief were the Jews.

Acts 3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer ... And a man lame from birth was being carried ... and Peter said to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And he took him by the right hand and raised him up ... and while he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people:

"Men of Israel ... what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

The Good News of our salvation in Jesus spread far and wide, and many of the Jewish people believed the good news and came to faith in Jesus. And they were thrilled! Thrilled about Jesus and all that He was and all that He meant to them. Thrilled to know, once and for all, their Messiah. Thrilled to be forgiven in His name. Thrilled to have assurance of eternal life with God! They couldn't have been more thrilled with Jesus!

But the book of Hebrews was written for a reason. Over time, what happened to these Jewish Christians? Many of them began to lose their focus. Ever happen to you? Ever happen to churches? Every day.

That's what was happening to some of these first Jewish Christians. They were losing their focus. Of course, Jesus was important to them. They had come to believe in Him as the promised Messiah; as their Savior! But they were under great persecution from many of the unbelieving Jews; their families and friends; their communities; their synagogues, their religious leaders. Under pressure by the Romans authorities, who were increasingly turning against this new sect, called Christianity.

And some of these new Christians began to do what? They began to shrink back. They stopped sharing their excitement about Jesus. They didn't talk about Him so much anymore. And they were being pressured to rethink their new faith in Jesus. What about everything they had been taught, from childhood on? What about Moses? Where they going to give up on all that he had taught? What about the Law, that set them apart? What about the priesthood and the sacrifices and the temple and their holy days? What about their dietary laws; their special foods; their fasts and feasts and everything else? Were they now going to just dump all of that; turn their backs on everything, and live like the Gentiles!

Maybe they *had* gone too far! And many of these new believers were tempted to turn back; to turn their focus from Jesus, back to what they had known all their lives. And so, the author of Hebrews, seeing what was taking place and what was at stake for these new Christians, writes to them to refocus them, to bring them back to the truth of the gospel - the truth of God and all that He had spoken to them - about His Son Jesus; how He was supreme over everything else; the fulfillment of all that He had spoken to them in the past.

And so, he reminds them, "*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ...*" In the past, God spoke through the prophets. But now, the prophets are no longer needed. The One they spoke of is here. He's come. He's arrived. And now, God speaks to us by His Son.

Could it be that *we too* today lose *our* focus? *We* drift away? *We* wonder off? *We* get led astray from Jesus? Our focus shifting from Jesus to the newest trend in the church? The latest book? A popular speaker or pastor? Teaching about the end times, or Old Testament laws or feasts, Baptism, the will of God, what heaven will be like, the Sabbath? Could it be that our focus shifts from Jesus to our emotions? Our pain? Our plans? Our kids? Our desires? It could be anything. It's everything else.

As Hebrews was written to refocus those early Jewish believers who were in danger of drifting away from Jesus, it is written to us today, who are in danger of the same. To bring us back to the truth of the gospel. That Jesus would be supreme in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives.

God spoke. Why would He do that? Why would He bother? What would motivate Him to speak to you? Your lost soul. Your tendency to lose your focus and drift away from Him. His desire to save you; to bring you back into fellowship with Him, forever!

What's the Bible all about? God speaking to you, both in the Old Testament and in the New. He was something to tell you you'd never dream of; something you would never expect. God has got Good News for us! News about One who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; was pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities, bringing us peace.

That's what God wants for us rebels. Not to destroy us, but peace. Fellowship with Him. The reason He created us in the first place. God speaks, because He cares and wants us to know peace. Peace *with Him*.

Have you ever wished God would talk with you; that He would speak to you? He has! In these coming weeks through the book of Hebrews, listen to what He has to say to you, especially, about His Son.