

"GOD HAS SPOKEN"
 HEBREWS 1:1-2A
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There is one verse that has, since my youth, been a very favorite verse of mine.

The verse is Hebrews 1:1 and the beauty of it lays in what it says but I confess to an affection for the way it is stated in the antiquated but majestic King James Version.

"God,
 who at sundry times and in diverse manners
 spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets
 hath in these last days
 spoken unto us by his Son"

That's an awesome statement - God has spoken!

He is not silent.

He could have said nothing - we could be all on our own.

We could be as ignorant of him as is a tribal witch doctor.

But the creator of the universe, of you and me, has spoken, he has said something - He is communicating with us.

God is talking!

We don't have to guess what he thinks,
 we don't have to wonder how we relate to him,
 we don't have to question what his plan is.
 God has spoken!

But not everyone knows that.

The late English philosopher, Bertrand Russell said, "...man is the product of (chance) causes...His origins, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of (the) accidental (meeting) of atoms;... all the labor of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system." (Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell p 62)

Russell said there is no God to speak - hence no word from God.

Do you ever doubt the existence of God?

Do you ever wonder if he is really there?

Like Russell, others have said God is so silent, he must not exist.

Ingmar Bergman, the Swedish director, has written brilliant screenplays on the subject of God's supposed silence.

In the film "The Seventh Seal" there is a man seeking God. He is named Antonius Block, a knight returning from the Crusades.

Early in the film the Knight stops at a wayside chapel and enters the confessional booth.

He is not aware that the one hearing his confession is Death.

Listen to the exchange:

Knight: "Why can't I (get God out of my mind)? Why, in spite of everything, is he a baffling reality that I can't shake off? Do you hear me?"

Death answered: "Yes, I hear you."

Knight: "I want knowledge, not faith, not suppositions, but knowledge. I want God to stretch out his hand toward me, reveal himself, speak to me."

Death responded: "But he remains silent."

Knight: "I call out to him in the dark, but no one seems to be there."

Death responds again: "Perhaps no one is there."

Knight: "Then life is an outrageous horror. No one can live ...knowing that all is nothingness."

The talented Samuel Beckett wrote a play entitled "Breath".

The play was 35 seconds long.

The audience would assemble in the theatre.

The curtain would separate revealing a pile of trash on center stage under dim lights.

There were no actors, only a long cry would be heard and then as the lights brightened a little and then dimmed again, the audience would hear an inhaled breath slowly, agonizingly exhaled followed by a long cry as the curtain closed.

That was Beckett's commentary on life.

Such a cynical view seems incongruous at Christmas time.

But Beckett and Bergman aren't far off if God has not spoken, if God is not there.

If there is no God (that we can know), then even Christmas is nothing but a brightly colored, beautifully packaged, and bountifully profitable charade.

But God has spoken.

Life is not one long twilight before total darkness.

Light has come into the world.

My life and yours do have meaning and we can have a future.

There are four ways God has spoken.

I want to mention three of those ways briefly not because they are insignificant but because I want to get on to the fourth way which is so much more complete.

In Romans 1:20, as in other places in Scripture, we learn of the first way God speaks to humanity: READ

“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

By looking at what has been created we learn that God is.

In Romans 2:14-15 we learn of a second way that God speaks to us.

READ

“When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness...”

By looking within we see that we stand guilty before the God who is.

The third way God speaks to us is more comprehensive.

Hebrews 1:1 tells us, that God has spoken through the prophets.

Many times in the Bible the word "prophets" is a reference not only to men like Daniel, Jeremiah and Isaiah but to all the authors of all the Old Testament books (from Genesis to Malachi).

Throughout the O.T. we find it written, "thus saith the Lord" or "This is what God said."

And when it says "God has spoken" that is not a metaphor for some non-verbal communication - it means literally God has spoken - God has used words, statements, questions and commands spoken either by him or by his appointed messengers such as angels.

And the Bible is not a human editorial about God but it is God's communication, God's words to people. God has spoken.

The author of Hebrews along with the other authors of the Bible testify to this central truth - this is the Word of God - God has spoken.

God superintended the history as it happened and the writing of it as it was penned.

A story in TIME magazine asked a question in its title:

"The Bible, Fact or Fiction?"

The writers of the article recounted some of the historical and archeological findings of recent years that corroborate some of the historical statements of the Bible.

What I found interesting was not that TIME gave a rather rational and even balanced review of the findings but most interesting were the LETTERS to the editor in the following weeks.

A religious leader wrote, "I find religiously irrelevant the question of whether events described in the Bible represent historical fact. If it could be proved that every event portrayed in the Bible is absolutely and unequivocally historically false, my faith would remain unaltered."

Another wrote, "As a trained theologian and pastor, I am not concerned with whether there was an Abraham, a Noah, a 40-year trek in the wilderness, or an invasion of Palestine. Those stories were created to convey theological truth..."

Well, maybe they aren't concerned but I am!
I find the question of historicity exceedingly relevant!

If the Bible is nothing more than the fanciful musings of the philosophically curious then God has not spoken and I don't know any more about him than I can learn from the stars above and the conscience within -

And what I learn by those two means leaves me very insecure indeed -

For all they tell me is that God is and that I'm guilty.

But God has spoken!
The Old Testament is God's revelation of himself.

But the author of Hebrews is not interested only in writing that God has spoken through the Old Testament.

The author's greatest interest is in getting on to the major point -
"But in these last days he has spoken to us by His SON."

Yes, God spoke in the past BUT NOW God has spoken in a way that is far superior - He has spoken to us by His Son.

The author wants us to know that God has now spoken to us in a way that is unlike anything before.

He is no longer limiting what he wants to say creation, conscience or even the Scriptures - He is instead going to come Himself in the person of His SON and say it directly by his very presence and voice.

The big difference is that before, God used prophets - now, he is using His own Son.

Don't misunderstand, the author is not suggesting for a minute that the Old Testament is now unnecessary or that it is faulty.

No, God's words to us in the O.T. are still God's words. AND...
 And the revelation of God in Jesus can only be understood
 within the context of the former revelation in the O.T.
 The O.T. sets the stage for the new.

The problem with the O.T. is not that it is in any way faulty BUT that it is INCOMPLETE.

The picture we get of God in the O.T. is an awesome picture but the difference between a picture of God and having God present is even greater than the difference between having a picture of your loved one and having them with you.

What we have in the Bible is what theologians call "progressive revelation". It is not that the progress is from the less true to the more true but from the less complete to the more complete.

The Old Testament writers knew they didn't have the full picture.
 They knew they were only seeing part of the plan.

Slowly over time God revealed himself ever more fully.
 Abraham had only occasional contact with God.
 Moses several hundred years later had much more - he had the written Word of God - the Law.
 But then Jesus came and John says it best, "The Word became flesh and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the father - full of grace and truth. They saw God.

Jesus is the Father's ultimate revelation of himself.
 There is no greater revelation of the Father than Jesus.

- If you want to hear God - don't listen to anything else.
- If you want to see God - don't look anywhere else.
- If you want to know God - don't seek for anyone else.

And he has spoken because he wants to communicate with us - He wants to tell us something that is of eternal significance -
 That we can belong to Him, we can know Him.
 That we can know God.

A few years ago, through newspaper articles and eventually a movie, the nation learned about a Canadian whose nickname is "Father Goose."

His actual name is Bill Ashman and he grew up in Ontario.

When he was little he used to wish he could fly like the birds.

Forty years later a friend said to him, "Bill you are always talking about flying like a bird, have you ever thought of hang-gliding?"

Well Bill tried it and then he built one of those ultra-light single engine airplanes - the kind that looks like a go-cart with wings and a propeller.

Still remembering that he wanted to fly not only like but WITH the birds an animal trainer friend asked him if he had ever heard of "imprinting".

That's where young geese are taken immediately from their eggs and spend time with someone other than another goose.

Bill tried it.

He walked all around the yard with them

He rode his motorbike around and they followed him.

Then he tried his ultra-light airplane.

It took two years but one morning they followed right into the air and right next to the wings of his plane.

The scientific community learned of what Bill was doing and they got an idea.

The Trumpeter Swan, which had been bred in captivity, was becoming extinct because when they released them into the wild, they couldn't get them to migrate.

Using the same method of "imprinting" that he used with the geese, Bill became "one" with the Trumpeter swans and led them to migrate South and then in the Spring, migrate home again.

God in his desire to save us from extinction used a plan to show us how to get home – home to a relationship with our creator God.

But he not only got close to us, He became one of us.

God the Son came and he's not pretending to be God and man, he **is** God and he **is** human.

One author put it this way: "God is engaged in a stunning love affair with the human family. In the person of the Son, God exposes himself as incarnate to satisfy our need to grasp him with our senses: to see him, to listen to him, to touch him." (Lane CTC p32)

God has revealed himself by coming to us.
That's what Christmas is all about.

Author Ken Gire has creatively expressed the awesome mystery of God becoming a human being:

"Joseph's eyes dart around the stable.
Not a minute to lose. Quickly!
A feeding trough would have to make do for a crib.
Hay would serve as a mattress.
Blankets? Blankets? Ah, his robe. That would do.
A gripping contraction doubles Mary over and sends Joseph racing for a bucket of water.

The birth would not be easy, either for the mother or the child.
For every royal privilege for this son ended at conception.

A scream from Mary knives through the calm of that silent night.
Sweat pours from Mary's contorted face as Joseph, the most unlikely midwife in Judea, rushes to her side.

The involuntary contractions are not enough and Mary has to push with all her strength, almost as if God were reluctant to come into the world.

Joseph places a garment beneath her, and with a final push and a long sigh her labor is over – The Messiah has arrived.

Elongated head from the constricting journey, mucus in his ears and nostrils, wet and slippery from the amniotic fluid, the Son of the Most High God is still umbilically tied to a lowly Jewish girl.

The baby chokes, coughs and then cries.
 Mary lays him on her chest and his helpless cries subside.
 Deity nursing from a young maiden's breast.
 Could anything be more puzzling, more profound?

The baby finishes and sighs, the divine Word reduced to a few unintelligible sounds.
 Then for the first time, his eyes fix on his mother's.
 Deity straining to focus.
 The light of the world, squinting.

Tears pool in her eyes. She touches his tiny hand.
 And hands that once sculpted mountain ranges cling to her fingers.

And so with hardly a ripple of notice, God stepped into the cold lake of humanity.

Ken Gire (paraphrased from pgs 4-5 of [Intimate Moments with the Savior](#)1989)

God has spoken!

Ingmar Bergman, the Swedish film producer I mentioned earlier, tells of one day having a vision of wandering around a great cathedral and coming before a picture of Christ. He demanded of the picture:

"Speak to me. I will not leave this cathedral until you speak to me."

The picture did not speak and that year Bergman produced another of his films on man's despair of ever finding God - the film was titled, "The Silence" - as if God has not spoken.

Bergman was looking in the wrong place.

"God is not silent!" He has spoken and he has spoken completely and finally in his Son.

It is in looking at the character and speech and actions and above all the supreme action of Christ's death on the cross for us that we SEE and HEAR God - a God who came, who spoke and who loves us.

God has spoken.

Now it is our turn.

God says, "I came."

"I came to pay the penalty for your sin - sin that will forever keep you from me if it is not forgiven.

I come offering you forgiveness.

Will you come to me to receive that forgiveness and to receive life, real life?

And now it is our turn.

Have you responded to God?

The Bible says, Jeremiah 29:13 "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD"

It is as simple as calling out to him to come to you, forgive you, and give you his life.

The Bible says, "As many as receive him, to them he gives the right to become the children of God."

God has come, God has spoken, what do you say?