

Worship 17
Proclaiming and Hearing the Word of God as Worship 1
Heb. 1:1-2a

Introduction:

1. Generally when we think of proclaiming the word of God we think of pulpits, preachers and preaching. We think of sitting and listening. To be sure the word of God can be communicated this way, but this is not the only way. And while public assemblies are effective this is not the only time the word of God can be communicated.
2. Receiving communication from God is the very first element of worship. True worship begins with God communicating to His people.
3. Heb. 1 begins with the awesome proclamation: God spoke!
4. The writer then elaborates that God spoke to the fathers. The general rule is that God speaks to His people. There is an exception of Jonah who spoke to the Ninevites, but this is the exception. God speaks to His people!
5. And he elaborates further that He spoke in many portions and in many ways.
 - a. Sometimes He speaks audibly, as He did to Moses from the burning bush.
 - b. Sometimes He writes. 2 Chron. 23:18 refers to the things “written in the law of Moses.”
 - c. Sometimes He communicates through others. In Deut. 18:18 He said, “I will raise up a prophet, and I will put My words in His mouth, and he shall speak all that I command him.”
6. Sometimes God uses memorials as communication tools. Ex. The Passover, The Lord’s Supper.
7. Sometimes God tells us things (Ex. Matt. 28:19). Sometimes He shows us things (ex. Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5). Sometimes He necessarily implies things (Ex. Acts 10:9ff). This is just the way communication occurs.
8. In this lesson we will look at some prominent first testament prophets and what they communicated. We will observe how the people responded and what happened. Our interest is to learn what we should do both in communicating the word of God and in hearing and doing it.

Discussion:

- I. While God had communicated before to the patriarchs who communicated with their families, we are going to consider Moses as our first example of a communicator of God’s message.
 - A. While Moses is associated with communicating the Ten Commandments his teaching was far more than that.
 1. His teaching encompasses the first five books of the first testament.
 2. The Ten Commandments are never elevated above the other revelation given by God in Scripture. The Ten Commandments are no more and no less authoritative than the other things revealed by the prophets.

- B. In Ex. 24:7 it mentions that Moses “took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people.”
 - 1. This “book of the covenant” probably included everything from Ex. 20:1-23:19.
 - 2. That section of Exodus includes the ten commandments, and a whole host of moral and ethical principles involving subjects like the protection of life, kidnapping, property rights, sexual behaviors, justice, Sabbath and national feast days.
- C. The Book of Deuteronomy is a powerful statement of Mosaic methodology in communicating.
 - 1. In chapters 1-4 he reminds the people of what God had done for His people. He reminds them of God’s graciousness, the provisions, the care, the promise of the land and then he urges them to obey the Lord’s instruction (4:5-9).
 - 2. This is followed by a repeated statement of the Ten Commandments and an appeal to listen and be careful to do what the Lord commanded (Deut. 6:1-3).
 - 3. Moses warned them not to forget the Lord in the land they were going over to possess (Deut. 8:11ff).
 - 4. Moses looked toward the future in calling on parents and grandparents to teach their children (Deut. 6:1-3). In an additional effort to influence the future Moses called on the King to NOT multiply horses, wives, silver, or gold, but to make a personal copy of the Law and to read it and learn to fear the Lord (Deut. 17:18-20).
 - 5. As Moses approached the end of his life God predicted that Israel would leave Him for other gods (Deut. 31). When Moses commissioned Joshua he commissioned the Levites to put the book of the law beside the ark of the covenant as a witness against them.
 - 6. Moses saw God as just and faithful and upright. He saw the people as a “crooked and perverse generation” (Deut. 32:4-5). Not every individual was crooked, but that was their generalized disposition.

II. Joshua was the next great communicator of God’s message.

- A. We thrill to hear God’s word to Joshua. “Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous” (Josh. 1:5-6). God said, “Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses, My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it” (7-8).
- B. After Joshua had led Israel into the promised land and divided the land between the respective tribes he commended the tribes who had inherited land beyond the Jordan (Josh. 22:1-6).
 - 1. He commended them for keeping what Moses commanded.
 - 2. He commended them for keeping what he had commanded them.
 - 3. He commended them for their loyalty to their brothers.
 - 4. He said, “Be careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His

ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

- C. At the end of his life Joshua reminded the people that God had done just what He said He would do. He had given them the land, but Joshua warned them to be faithful or they would perish from off the land (Josh. 23:14ff).
- D. His closing exhortation is famous (24:1ff).
 - 1. The less famous part involves him reminding them of what God had done for them.
 - 2. So, choose whom you will serve.
- E. The book of Joshua closes with this summary: “Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel” (24:31).
- F. But after Joshua’s death the message of God seems to have been forgotten. The next generation after Joshua forsook the Lord for idols (Judges 2:10-15). 1 Sam. 3:1-3 says, “Word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.”

III. King David was an effective communicator of God’s message.

- A. I am supposing that David did what Deut. 17 said kings were to do.
 - 1. Write a personal copy of the law.
 - 2. Read it and learn to fear the Lord and carefully observe all the words.
- B. There are at least two things that evidence of this.
 - 1. When he organized the temple worship he did it “according to all that was written in the law of the Lord” (1 Chron. 16:40).
 - 2. His end of life statement to Solomon reflects his devotion to God’s law (1 Kings 2:1-4).
- C. Solomon seems to have started well (1 Kings 3:28ff).
 - 1. God validated his start by appearing to him (1 Kings 3:5).
 - 2. God’s second appearance involved a warning (1 Kings 9:4-9).
- D. Solomon’s later life, however, reflects his ignoring of the instruction (1 Kings 10:23-11:9).

IV. What do we learn from these great first covenant communicators?

- A. They received communication from God before they spoke.
- B. They read God’s word to the people.
- C. They reminded of God’s goodness.
- D. They warned of the consequences of not being faithful to God.
- E. They looked beyond their own lives into the future of instructing children, grandchildren and kings.
- F. While they saw God as gracious, they saw the people as crooked and perverse, not everyone, but generally.
- G. They admonished.
- H. They commended loyalty to God.
- I. Their end-of-life statements were exhortations to obedience.
- J. They communicated to their children.

K. They charged their sons to obey the Lord and prosper.

L. And yet, people were disobedient. They forgot the Lord and seemed to have ignored the instruction (1 Kings 10:23-11:9).

Conclusion:

1. May this not be the case with us.
2. Although many heard only some obeyed.
3. Although many hear only some heed the word.
4. Are you one who hears and obeys?