

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## DOES GOD SPEAK TODAY?

*By Andrew Dow*

Many people throughout history have claimed to have contact with the divine. In fact, entire religious movements are based on supposed messages from above. What are we to do with these claims? Does the Lord speak directly to individuals today? What does God reveal in Scripture?

### God Formerly Spoke Through Prophets

The epistle to the Hebrews begins, “**God... spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways**” (Heb. 1:1, NASB). From a Biblical perspective this is clear. Prophets of God were not fortune tellers; their primary role was dispensing the Word of God. Moses and Aaron provide an example of a prophet’s relationship to God. The Lord instructed Moses concerning his brother Aaron, “**You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth.... Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him**” (Exo. 4:15- 16). Later the Lord tells Moses, “**See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet**” (Exo. 7:1). This illustrates the role of God’s prophets: God tells them what to say and they say it.

God utilized prophets as spokesmen, but just because someone claimed to be speaking for God did not guarantee that they truly were. This is one reason Israel’s history is

rife with false prophets. The fact is, God only used select individuals as His spokesmen. In order to distinguish true spokesmen from the “wannabes” Moses established a test in Deuteronomy 18—**“When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken”** (v. 20-22).

The Old Testament is full of prophets saying, “Thus says the Lord” (or some variation). When true prophets of God spoke these words, their words came to pass. There can be no doubt that **“God... spoke long ago in the prophets”** (Heb. 1:1).

### **God Now Speaks Through His Son**

The Hebrew author continues, **“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets... in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...”** (Heb. 1:1-2). In Deuteronomy 18, where the test of a true prophet is given, Moses foretells the coming of a superior prophet: **“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him... ‘and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him’”** (v. 15). There is a general sense in which every true prophet of God following Moses fulfills this prophecy, but none fulfills it so well as Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-26; 7:35-39).

The first-century crowds recognized that there was something prophet-like about Jesus. Many assumed that Jesus was **“John the Baptist... Elijah... Jeremiah, or one of the prophets”** (Matt. 16:14). Perhaps this was due to the way he spoke: **“He was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes”** (Matt. 7:28-29). He spoke as if He was speaking a message directly from God.

That's exactly what He was doing, and the people were right to assume He was a prophet of God.

Before He died, Jesus informed His disciples, **“The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works”** (John 14:10). By making these claims, Jesus was calling Himself a prophet of God and opening Himself up to be examined by the same test that Moses presented in Deuteronomy 18. Had Jesus' words come to pass, or had He failed to properly speak for God? The saddest point in the Bible is when God's people put to death the truest Prophet who was ever sent. The irony is made clear when Jesus is resurrected from the dead, confirming that His message was truly from the Lord.

### **What About Today?**

As we've already seen, **“God... in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...”** (Heb. 1:1-2). Take note that we are living in **“these last days.”** With that being said, the Hebrew author tells us that God is still speaking to us **“in His Son.”** The message that Christ preached in His earthly ministry and the message that He continued to teach through His apostles is the same message that God expects us to hear and obey today. Paul told the Galatians that his message was NOT from any earthly source, but from the prophet of God, Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

Jude tells us that our faith was, **“once for all handed down”** (v. 3). There is no need for God to speak directly to individuals today, because everything needed has already been given through Jesus Christ, the prophet! The faith of the saints has already been delivered to them. Paul taught that additional revelations were to be rejected (Gal. 1:8-9). Christ's words are sufficient and final.

## Conclusion

I once had the opportunity to speak to an individual who believed God personally speaks to people in various ways today. This person believed that after our salvation God and the Bible will tell us what we should and shouldn't be doing. When we examine the Scriptures, however, we find that God instructs us THROUGH the Bible. There is no need for further revelations today, because the message of Christ has been completely delivered to us in the Bible.

It used to be that God spoke “**in many portions and in many ways,**” but He only communicates in one way today. Don't wait for God to whisper in your ear, come to you in a dream, or send an angel to you. God has already spoken to you in His book, the Bible. The Lord DOES speak today! Are you listening?

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**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**