

## God's Communication and Works In This World

(Deuteronomy 8)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the difficulties we face as followers of God is dealing with the reality that He does not communicate to His people verbally, or directly, as He once did.
  - A. This can create concerns related to how we cope with problems.
    - i. For, when we are perplexed and seeking answers from God in prayer, He is not going to say, "the answer is \_\_\_\_\_" or "I am about to do \_\_\_\_\_."
    - ii. And God does not send an angel or a prophet that gives us the answer either.
    - iii. That is not to say that God does not answer us, but that if we are not attentive concerning God's word and its application to our lives, we may miss His answers.
2. And the fact that most of us here know that miraculous gifts and actions, which includes divine communication of God's will to individuals, ended in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century does not make us feel better.
  - A. How often I have wished God would tell me what is really going on, or if I am doing the right thing or making the right choice.
  - B. How often I have wished God would somehow *act* upon our world to rectify what often seems un-rectifiable.
3. Are we to feel slighted because that *directness* or the *immediateness* of His actions seem to be absent today?
  - A. The answer is "NO!" But why that is true needs to be examined.
  - B. So, let's consider God's communication to man and His actions in this world, and the role these play in man's history and our salvation.

### BODY:

#### **I. God has made Himself known to mankind.**

- A. God has spoken to His people.
  1. God spoke to the fathers.
    - a. God came to the garden and spoke to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8-11 – "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?").
    - b. God spoke to Noah (Gen. 6:12-14 – "And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. <sup>13</sup> And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup> Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch.").
    - c. God spoke to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3 – "Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.").
      - i. It is interesting that all three accounts involved either man's sin, sin's consequences, and/or God's plan to save man from His sin.
      - ii. Truly, that is the main purpose of God's communication with man.
  - d. And though there are many other examples like this, direct communication of this type has never been the norm.
2. God normally spoke to His people through His prophets (Heb. 1:1 – "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets").

- a. God spoke to Moses at the burning bush that he might reveal Him and His plan to deliver Israel (Ex. 3:4, 6-8 – “When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”...<sup>6</sup> He said also, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.”).
    - i. This began an *interactive* relationship between the two as Moses led Israel from Egypt and dealt with their many problems.
  - b. There was also Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others who brought God’s will to Israel and the world, often with displays of God’s miraculous power.
- B. God also manifested Himself by intervening directly in the events of human history.
1. Israel witnessed God’s intervention in His judgement against Egypt, parting the Red Sea, and His miraculous providence in feeding, protecting, and bringing victory over other nations.
  2. Israel witnessed God’s show of power and wrath against wicked men when Korah and his followers rebelled against God and His chosen leader, Moses (Num. 16:31-32, 35 – “As he [Moses] finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; <sup>32</sup> and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions...<sup>35</sup> Fire also came forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.”).
    - a. This was an amazing display of God’s power to deal with wicked and rebellious people.
    - b. I wonder if we do not hope, at times, the same would happen to the wicked today?
  3. Though there are many such incidents to cite, the most important is God’s intervening by manifesting Himself in time and space in Jesus, His Son (John 1:1-2, 14 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God...<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”).
    - a. What an amazing truth—that God became flesh!
    - b. God chose to change the course of history by sending Jesus and making known to all...
      - i. Spiritual life and light (1:4 – “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.”).
      - ii. Grace and truth (1:17 – “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.”).
    - c. We again see an astounding display of God’s great power, love, and grace for the world to witness, know, and benefit from!

## II. Are we disadvantaged?

- A. God does not...
  1. Speak to us like He did to Adam and Eve, Noah, and Abraham.
  2. God does not reveal Himself and His will to modern day prophets to convey to us.
  3. God does not miraculously intervene today in human history with spectacular manifestations of His power, nor have we ever personally seen Jesus.
- B. What if...
  1. My relationship with God could be *interactive* like Moses’?
    - a. God revealed Himself to Moses that He might know His will and lead Israel to the Promised Land and did amazing wonders through His hand.
    - b. Despite all that he saw and heard from God, Moses’ frustration with leading Israel caused his faith to falter and he disobeyed God and missed the Promised Land. For after God told him to speak to the rock for water (Num. 20:10-12 – “and Moses and Aaron gathered the

- assembly before the rock. And he said to them, “Listen now, you rebels; shall **we bring forth water for you out of this rock?**”<sup>11</sup> Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.<sup>12</sup> But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel**, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”).
2. What if...I could witness the wonders Israel saw, would not faithful service be easier?
    - a. Israel saw God’s great and miraculous power time and time again.
    - b. Yet, when time came to enter the land, ten spies gave a bad report and Israel lost faith in God and ultimately died in the wilderness (Num. 14:26-30 – “The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,<sup>27</sup> “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me.<sup>28</sup> Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you;<sup>29</sup> your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.<sup>30</sup> Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.”).
- C. What if...God spoke to us as He did the prophets, would faithful service would be easier?
1. Despite being God’s prophet, Isaiah still wondered why God was not taking action for His glory in this world (Isa. 63:15; 64:1-2, 6 – “Look down from heaven and see from Your holy and glorious habitation; where are Your zeal and Your mighty deeds? The stirrings of Your heart and Your compassion are restrained toward me...<sup>64:1</sup> Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence—<sup>2</sup> as fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence!...<sup>6</sup> For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”).
    - a. Isaiah pleaded with God to make Himself known to His enemies!
    - b. Isaiah was also pleading for God to save HIS people.
  2. Habakkuk wondered why God was not addressing the wickedness of Israel.
    - a. He wondered how long before God would hear him and respond (1:2-4).
    - b. When God spoke and revealed His plan, it involved the Chaldeans punishing Israel for their sin (1:5-6 – “Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days—you would not believe if you were told.<sup>6</sup> “For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous people who march throughout the earth to seize dwelling places which are not theirs.”).
    - c. This, however, was **far from what Habakkuk had in mind** (1:13 – “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?”).
- D. If I could have experienced Jesus presence on this earth, would not that make faithful service much easier?
1. Despite all that God did, including His very presence in human form and the miracles He did, the nation was unwilling to believe (Matt. 23:37-38 – “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **who kills the prophets** and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **and you were unwilling**.<sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”).
  2. The Jewish nation came to desolation when God again used a wicked nation, the Romans, to destroy Jerusalem, the temple, and bring them to an end (Matthew 24).

### III. We are blessed the way it is.

- A. We do not have to wait or go searching for a prophet to know God’s will, seeing that the **fullness of God’s truth** has been revealed for all to read and know.
1. The apostles were given the whole truth and they spoke it and wrote it down for us (John 16:13 – “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will **guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”).
  2. We have everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:2-3 – “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; <sup>3</sup> seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”).
  3. Paul said “that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I **wrote** before in brief. <sup>4</sup> By referring to this, when you **read** you **can understand** my insight into the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:3-4).
  4. The word completely furnishes gives us to serve (2 Tim. 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be **adequate, equipped for every good work**.”).
- B. When we get down, when we feel as though God is distant, disconnected, or that He simply is not acting on behalf of the righteous, remember...
1. God’s witness to you:
    - a. In creation (Rom. 1:18-20 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”).
    - b. In His blessings (Acts 14:16-17 – “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; <sup>17</sup> and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”).
  2. Those who live by faith and not sight are blessed (John 20:27-29 – “Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? **Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**”).
  3. If you are moping or complaining about our state of life, our nation, or the wickedness of our leaders,...
    - a. Remember Habakkuk’s prayer and God’s response.
      - i. The punishment of Israel’s wicked meant the righteous would also suffer greatly.
      - ii. Could it be that in response to our prayers for God to deal with our nation’s wickedness that the same type of destruction might be God’s plan?
    - b. Remember who God is and what He has done.
      - i. Has God ever shown Himself to be lax on sin or His justice to fail?
      - ii. Has God ever failed to do the perfectly right and needed thing at the perfectly right and needed time?
    - c. Ask yourself what the world and life would be like if God did everything you want, at the time you want, and in the way you want?

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Know that despite how we might perceive things to be, God is never truly silent, never without witness, never without meaningful action in this world.
2. For those who trust Him, confident, victorious living is theirs for the taking, no matter what may happen in this life.