

How and Where God Speaks

By Bob Young

The hand of the Lord was upon me there, and He said to me, "Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you." (Ezekiel 3:22)

The Hebrew writer begins his book by mentioning that God has spoken at various times and in various ways to his prophets. God speaks at various times, in different ways, and in various places. He spoke to Moses in the wilderness through a bush. He spoke to Balaam through a donkey. He spoke to the kings of Israel and to foreign kings through prophets. He spoke in palaces and in dreams. His prophets confronted the world's leaders in the Promised Land and in exile. In our text, God wanted to speak to Ezekiel in the plain. God speaks to his people through his people. He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures which are the sword of the Spirit and in the people, circumstances and providence of life where we see his will demonstrated—usually in hindsight rather than foresight.

Jesus talks about praying to God in the secrecy of one's closet. When God wanted to speak an important word to Ezekiel, without the interruptions of life, he took him to the plain. Likely the plain was a place with no distractions and no other people. It was probably a place of silence. Perhaps the plain was a place of scarcity without normal provisions. Hearing God demands that we seek His face. Sometimes we are moved to seek God by his power and the circumstances of life that leave us few options. Sometimes we seek God in the plain, that place of separation from our normal activities with jobs or families.

I grew up on the plains. I can envision the wide open spaces, the spectacular sunrises and sunsets, and the ability to see forever. I easily picture the plain as a place where we discover God's hand and see his handiwork, and learn that he has been with us all the time. When we are so busy with life, we forget that God is there, gently leading. When our lives get so busy that we are not listening or responding to his gentle touch, he takes more aggressive measures to get our attention. The plain for Ezekiel is an appointed time and place for communication with God. No distractions, no people, a barren place that allows one to seek God, listen, hear and understand. When God speaks, we must listen. Sometimes, we listen better on the plain.

I hope you have a quiet place where you can seek and hear God. Perhaps it is a closet; perhaps it is an office, a back yard, or a lake. We need to hear God's voice every day. Is your life such that you cannot hear His voice? God is calling you to your "plain". Take time to hear.