

When God Came Near and Spoke Our Language (Hebrews 2)

By Bob Young

I want to affirm two things today:

- In Jesus Christ, God came near to us in new and delightful ways not true of the OT
- In Jesus Christ, God provides communication with him

I want people to know that the God of the NT is a God who is near and is a God who understands

God in the OT

- Creator, walks in garden, seeks fellowship, but sin enters
- Adam/Eve, Cain/Abel, Noah, Babel
- Speaks to Abraham, interesting text, how, how does Abraham recognize God, know who he is?
- Genesis theophanies: Abraham's covenant experience; wrestle with God; dreams, ladders and sheaves
- God is "with his people", Genesis 26:24,28; 31:3; 39:2,3,21,23
- Question becomes vital: will God be with us? We pray, God be with....
- God is known to an extended family.
- Distant because he was unknown, he has to reveal himself, Ex. 3
- Exodus theophanies: burning bush, plagues? cloud and fire to lead the people
- Exodus 19, invisible, distant by holiness
- Exodus 32-34, the invisible God, will he be with Moses and the people?
- Heb 12:18-21

When the kingdom comes near in Christ in the NT, implies it was in some sense distant in the OT

- Distant in time
- Distant in experience
- But present in reality, kingdom of priests, OT expression of the kingdom of God, but was national, limited, physical

God in the NT

When God came near....

- The kingdom came near in Christ
- Jesus comes announcing, "The kingdom at hand, the kingdom is near...."
- The kingdom is within you (among you), Luke 17:21 Probably means spiritual and internal, there is an expression of the kingdom in the time of Jesus, but all of that was about to change.
- The king who comes in his kingdom changes everything about God-relationship. Matthew says he comes as servant king, Mark as servant Lord, Luke as Savior, John as God in the flesh.

In the NT, God speaks our language—language of hurt, need, temptation

John 1, Christ who is "the word", signifies communication, logic

Hebrews 2-4, Christ, after affirming Jesus' 7-fold identity (1:2-3) and that Jesus is superior to angels (1:4ff), Hebrews 2 affirms two things about Jesus.

- Jesus became like us.
- Jesus was thus able to represent us in his death.
- 2:5 God subjected the world to human beings

- 2:6-8 The Psalmist describes the human situation.
- 2:8 All has been subjected to human beings. God's purpose is the sovereignty of the human in the created realm, thus humans would be subject only to God. But sin has kept that from being a reality. See 2:15 to see that in fact humans have subjected themselves to sin.
- 2:9 In contrast to 2:5-8, Jesus' experience as a human being is different. **He became like us**, same description, but he has attained glory and honor because he suffered death (glory and honor through his death), and he has represented us in that death.
- **He is able to represent us in his death**, so that his life, death, and glory make possible the redemption of humanity and the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.
- 2:10 With the great goal in mind of bringing many to glory, it is a propos that Jesus be completely enabled as author of our salvation through suffering, thus showing his ultimate and complete participation in our experience.
- 2:11-13 We share in the same family.
- He understands our language, culture, situation, challenges, problems
- 2:14f He shares our humanity, and he frees us, represents us before God, atones for us, and even more—helps us.

Note these closing affirmations. Because he is like us and speaks our language....

- His death destroyed the power of death and frees us from the fear of death
- Think of illustrations from your own life that show how much people fear death.
- He priests us—represents us, serves on our behalf, atones for our sins
- We know how hard it is for us to deal with the reality of our lives
- He succors us, helps us.
- We want someone who understands.