

“Word from Heaven”
Exodus 20:22
(Preached at Trinity, March 2, 2008)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We have come to the end of the giving of the Ten Commandments. As we saw in **Verse 18** the people were terrified.
Exodus 20:18 – “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.”
 - A. They understood that they were dealing with the one true almighty God. The sounds and sights of the thunder and lightning and the ground quaking beneath their feet were reminders of the power and authority of God.
 - B. Moses was bringing them ten laws to which they would be accountable.
2. The question is, were these words penned by Moses or did they come from God Himself. If they were from Moses then they were only as binding as Moses’ ability to enforce them. But if they were from God they would need to be obeyed absolutely.
3. This has always been the question of man, “By what authority?”
The chief priests and elders challenged Jesus with this question:
Matthew 21:23 – “And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?”
4. God answers this question clearly and distinctly in **Verse 22**
Exodus 20:22 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.”
5. God thunders this to us over and over in Scripture
 - “Thus saith the Lord” appears 413 times in the OT
 - “word of the Lord” appears 255 times
 - “The LORD hath spoken” appears 30 times
6. Moses comes down and tells Israel – “Thus saith the LORD.” “God has spoken from heaven.”
7. This has some important implications for us
 - I. First, it speaks of the Authority of the Law – God was speaking from heaven
 - A. God was handing down His commandments by His infinite authority
 1. God has absolute dominion over His creation
 2. God has the right to give commands
 - a. God demonstrated this right from the very beginning
He spoke and all things came into being
Genesis 1:3 – “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

2 Corinthians 4:6 – “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

- b. We can also see this Divine authority as God related to man
Genesis 2:15-17 – “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

- B. God’s Law is called the Ten Commandments, not suggestions
 - 1. Most people approach these Commands as being optional or open to our discretion.
 - 2. You have situational ethics where we are told that certain circumstances can allow us to set aside the law. In other words they tell us we are allow to decide the conditions in which we will obey.
- C. These Ten Commandments are universal in scope
 - 1. They are binding upon all men and all men will be judged by them.
 - a. God alone has this kind of authority
 - b. No creature has the authority to give laws that are universally binding upon all men
 - c. Only God can give laws that are all encompassing over every area of life – they control our thoughts, actions, desires, emotions - everything
 - 2. They are universal in their demand
God demands absolute obedience
Deuteronomy 4:2 – “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
James 2:10 – “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.”
 - 3. God’s demands must be taught with authority
1 Timothy 4:11 These things command and teach.

II. Second, it speaks of the authority of God’s Word

- A. God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man
 - 1. He has spoken
 - 2. This is a great token of God’s mercy – that He would actually speak to fallen humanity. It demonstrates His great redemptive purpose in Christ Jesus.
- B. God’s Word is absolute
Isaiah 46:11 – “. . . yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.

Isaiah 46:9-11 – “Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ¹¹ Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.”

1. God’s Word is driven by His infinite power
Psalm 62:11 – “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.”
2. God’s Word is absolute because He has the power to accomplish it
3. God is subject to none, receives counsel from none – He works all things according to the counsel of His own will
Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”
** He isn’t *trying* to accomplish His will – He *IS* accomplishing His will

- C. God has been pleased to record His Word in Written form
 1. The word scripture or scriptures appears over 50 times in the NT
 2. God’s written Word has the same authority
Exodus 20:22 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.”
 3. When we read from these pages we must receive every word as coming with absolute authority
 - a. Far too many people find it too easy to dismiss the Word of God.
 - b. God’s Word must be obeyed

III. Third, it speaks of the authority of Christ

- A. All of Scripture points to Christ
Matthew 21:42 – “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”
Luke 24:25-27 – “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ²⁶ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”
Luke 24:44-45 – “And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,”
John 5:39 – “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

- B. God's ultimate revelation of Himself is through the Lord Jesus Christ
Hebrews 1:1-3 – “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”
1. The Eternal Word was one and the same with God
 2. In due time the Eternal Word became flesh
John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 3. The eternal God *spoke* from heaven. The eternal Son *came* from heaven
Matthew 1:23 – “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
 4. We have not been left without a word from heaven
 Jesus us our great Prophet
 Westminster Catechism
Q. 43. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?
 A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.
- C. Jesus Christ is our ultimate authority
1. Jesus lays claim to all authority
Matthew 28:18 – “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
 2. The Father affirmed His Son with a word from heaven
Matthew 17:5 – “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 3. He alone is the Head of the church. He alone is the ultimately foundation and cornerstone. He alone is our authority.
Colossians 1:18-19 – “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;”
- D. This in no way diminishes the Scriptures
1. The Word of God finds its authority in Christ
John 14:26 – “But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 2. The church was founded upon the apostles and their doctrine but the apostles were appointed by Christ to act for Him in His name. The Apostles wrote most of the NT but its authority does not rest upon the apostles but upon Christ.

3. How does Christ speak to us today? He speaks to us through His inspired Word. The authority of Christ and the authority of the Bible are inseparable.
- E. So what are the implications for us if Christ holds all authority and the Bible is His Word?
1. If the Bible is the word of Christ it is as if He is standing before us speaking. It is our word from heaven
“Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.”
 2. If the Bible contains the words of Christ then it speaks with absolute authority. Christ does not make suggestions. He speaks with authority
 3. If the Bible is not the words of Christ, then what is the basis by which He is ruling His Kingdom? How is He governing His church? By what rule?
 4. The Bible is the rule, the only standard. There is no higher court, no greater place of appeal.
 5. If we have a clear word from heaven then should we not conduct our lives accordingly?
- F. The Bible is our final authority
1689 London Baptist Confession, Chapter 1, Article 10
“The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.”
1. All of our social, ethical, and ecclesiastical controversies can be answered in this book – evolution, homosexuality, abortion, women in ministry – the answers are in this Book.
 2. Answers in how to have a strong marriage, raise your family, conduct yourself in the work place – all found in this Book.

Conclusion:

1. Our greatest problem is we do not want to live by the Words of Christ.
Mark 8:38 – “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”
John 14:23 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
2. Christ’s words are absolute and they will not fail
Matthew 24:35 – “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
3. You will be held accountable for every word. Do you believe it?
4. Ultimately, we can’t prove the Bible is the Word of God from heaven. We can’t even prove that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and Savior of men. It demands faith to believe that God has spoken from heaven. Do you believe it? And do you live as though you believe it? It is truly a matter of the heart. Do you love Christ and His Word?