

What To Say And What To Speak

Ryan Goodwin

While God spoke to mankind in many ways throughout the ages – through prophets and poets like Moses and David – in this final age, the culmination of God’s revelation is through Jesus Christ. Even men like David (2 Samuel 7:12-16) and Moses (Deuteronomy 18:14-19) knew that a Final Authority would one day come. Others like Abraham (John 8:56) also recognized the need for Jesus Christ and rejoiced over the culminating figure of God’s revelatory force. Hebrews 1:1-2 notes that *“in these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He has made the world.”* While God has revealed Himself in diverse ways throughout history, He was perfectly manifested in His Son (Matthew 11:27).

Everything Jesus spoke was truth directly from God. It was and is authoritative over all mankind, for all time. *“I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world...When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me... If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:26-32). It is undeniable that Jesus’ words serve as the final authority in all matters. He also brought His listeners back to His word, just as He said in John 12:44-50, *“He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me... He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak”* (John 12:44-50).

Was There A Need For Anything Else?

Even Jesus acknowledged that His ministry was a limited one (Matthew 10:5-6, 15:24). He only crossed the barrier between Jew and Gentile occasionally, and often with (intentional) hesitation (Mark 7:24-30). He served as the fulfillment of the Law given at Mt. Sinai to the Israelites (Romans 10:4, John 1:17, Matthew 5:17-20). So even though Jesus was given *“all authority in heaven and on earth”* (Matthew 28:18), we have to keep His ministry within its context. He came to fulfill the Law, to finish it, to satisfy the requirement for a perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10, 19-22). He left His apostles behind to build up the product of that sacrifice: His Kingdom. He told the apostles, *“You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the outermost parts of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). I suppose one question that “gospels-only” folks might have a hard time answering is how any of us can possibly benefit from the ministry of Jesus *without* the apostles, since Jesus apparently left the ministry to the Gentiles up to them (Acts 10:34-43). It was not Jesus, at least in any personal way, that went into all the world preaching, but His apostles after Him. Without them, where would we be?

It is clear that the gospels do not include *everything* that Jesus did or said. If this was not clear from the accounts themselves, John makes the statement plainly in John 20:30 and John 21:25. What Jesus wanted His disciples to say and write would be soul-saving in nature, and He promised them that the essential sayings of His ministry would be preserved and propagated by them under the divine influence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:22-26). Jesus told His disciples that additional information would be needed to

complete their work, but that information would only come at a later time. He specifically said, *"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now"* (John 16:12). In the next verse He explains that the Spirit would guide them to a complete knowledge of *"all the truth"* and that the message would be coming straight from God – contrary to the opinions of liberal theologians today who flatly deny the inspiration of Peter, Paul, and the other New Testament writers. They were not merely voicing their opinions, but information that was disclosed to them from God!

- As a side note, it should be understood that no new revelation would come after the age of the apostles, since whatever was revealed to them was *"all the truth"* (John 16:13) and they were taught *"all things"* by the Spirit (John 14:26). As Peter so clearly puts it in 2 Peter 1:3 or as Jude says in Jude 3, everything that we need for salvation was completely delivered to us. Therefore, no new revelation would come (for it was unnecessary) and no changes or revisions could be made (since *"all truth"* means what it says). What the apostles said had the authority of Jesus behind it (2 Peter 3:1-2).