

Scripture Reference: Matthew 2:1-15

Date: December 29, 2013

Title: "Another Way"

Focus: Hearing God

Intro:

1. God literally altered the paths of two groups of people, the Wise Men and Mary and Joseph.

2. In the case of the Wise Men, it was God's direction that took them along another route home than that originally envisioned. For Mary and Joseph, they ended up in Egypt, a place they had not anticipated going. How did this happen? God told them to go.

3. So demonstrates the effect God's speaking can have upon the course of a person's life. At a time when many people are considering options, it is wise to turn our attention to hearing God. He deserves a place of input and direction in life. What if He has others plans for you?

Both Accounts Presume God Speaks

The Bible in general, and this passage in particular, does not treat God speaking as unnatural. As evidenced here, no explanation is given regarding God speaking.

Nor is God speaking presented as out of the ordinary, because no special attention is drawn to it.

Instead, YHWH speaking is given as a simple fact, a natural occurrence, "He spoke".

Readers are given the clear impression these people heard God and acted based on His guidance.

They were not responding to feelings, intuition, or personal "gut instinct".

Instead, what God made known to the Wise Men as well as Mary and Joseph, they did.

God is completely able and willing to make Himself known. In addition, humanity is capable of hearing God and responding to Him.

Why then do we not hear Him? The particulars of each case provide us some answers.

vv. 1-12; The Wise Men were Seeking Him

The Wise Men were seeking God. They were open to Him, regardless of the form He spoke. This is the easiest way to hear God

Throughout history God has used a variety of means to reveal Himself. He has used nature, as with the Wise Men. The OT records accounts of God making Himself known through visions.

As is seen with the Wise Men and Joseph, God also uses dreams.

But, what the NT tells us is that God's primary means of making Himself known now is through Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2).

People can miss hearing God because they are not open to Him speaking. They are not seeking Him.

If a person excludes God, turns a deaf ear to Him, then nature has nothing to reveal about God.

For those who believe God would never speak to them, when He does, it is overlooked.

If people believe God only speaks in grand and majestic ways, when He speaks in His preferred way, a still small voice, He is lost among the other sounds around them (1 Kings 19:11-13).

vv. 13-15; Mary and Joseph Were Open for the Unexpected

While Mary and Joseph were not actively seeking God, they were sensitive to His voice.

Like everyone else, they had plans, desires, and unanticipated occurrences in their lives. But, unlike some, they allowed God a place in the events of their lives.

They were not distracted to the point that God could not get their attention.

Luke 1:29; “[The angel] *said to her, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'* *But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.*”

God intervened in Mary’s life and she “pondered” what He has to say. She thought it over, considered and mused over the matter. She did not dismiss it.

When God spoke to Joseph, he did not reject it out of hand either (Matt. 1:24 / 2:21).

Neither of them stated, “That couldn’t be God! He wouldn’t do that!”

It must be recognized that God speaks about things in ways that are not our ways and about matters that are higher than we can imagine. When He does, often our response is to dismiss it as ludicrous and impossible.

God can be missed because He is not saying what we want to or are accustomed to hearing.

Closing:

1. Do you believe what the Bible reveals, that God speaks? Do you believe humanity has the capability to hear and respond to God?

2. The ultimate test of this is that you look for God to speak, that you respond to Him as He moves.

3. Does your life bears the marks of God’s leading? Has it been altered in any way?

