

I HAVE SPOKEN – YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED! Jeremiah 25.1-3

In Jeremiah 25, at the center of the book of Jeremiah and spoken at the midpoint of his prophetic career, Jeremiah uses an interesting word: *hashkem*. The word literally means *to speak early and often*. It is translated in the NIV “I have spoken to you again and again.”

The word has a picture behind it. *Shechem* means shoulder and sometimes would include the back of the neck, or, the shoulder blade.

Exodus 12.34; Isaiah 10.27; 9.6

At the center of Palestine, there are two immense shoulder mountains, Ebal and Gerazim. The village nestled between these massive shoulders is named Shechem.

Joshua 8.33; 24.14-15

Then, as words do, *shechem* developed another meaning. When you went on a trip in those days, you loaded provisions for the journey on your donkey's shoulders, or put them on your own shoulders, and set them out. So the noun, shoulder, developed into a verb that meant "load the shoulders of beasts for a day's journey." In a hot country like Israel it was important to get in as many miles as possible before the sun came up and fatigued you, so such journeys characteristically began long before dawn. Eventually, the word came to describe the activity of people who got up early before the sun and set out with heavy burdens on long journeys. They got up early in order to have as many hours as possible to do what they intended to do.

*“The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: For **twenty-three years**—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and **I have spoken to you again and again**, but you have not listened.”* Jeremiah 25.1-3

Jeremiah 7.13, 25-26, (27); 11.7-8; 25.3-4; 26.4-6; 29.19; 32.33; 35.14-15; 44.4

A Ready Heart

*“My heart is steadfast, O God;
I will sing and make music with all my soul.
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
**For great is your love, higher than the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.**
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
and let your glory be over all the earth.”* Psalm 108.1-5

Jeremiah 2.23-27, 36

New Every Morning

Where did Jeremiah learn his persistence? How did he get the word into his vocabulary and into his life? Certainly not by observing the people around him. He learned it from God.

*“Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his **compassions** never fail.
They are new every morning; great is your **faithfulness**.”*

*I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’
The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;
it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Lamentations 3.22-26*

“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15.58