

Hearing God's Voice

Lesson One

I. Introduction

Text: *Hearing God* by Henry and Richard Blackaby

Supplemental text for Lesson 1 – *Secrets of the Prophetic* by Kim Clement

Does God Speak to People Today?

What are the times in your life when you feel you need to hear from God?

- Need guidance/direction
- Need encouragement
- Need a word to help others
- Need to know about God
- Need daily help

Some believe God rarely, if ever, speaks to people today. They believe:

- God has revealed everything we need to know in the Bible
- They need no further word from God
- For God to speak to someone today would be to “add” to the Bible
- The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, but He is not needed to apply Scripture in our lives
- God's written Word is His final Word
- Positive: This approach does point people to the Bible. We should always make decisions according to the teachings of the Bible.

The Bible tells us that God wants to be involved in our lives.

He created us for intimate relationship with Him.

God will never lead us to act contrary to the written word of God.

We are encouraged to study the scriptures, because they point to Christ.

When God speaks He does not give new revelation of Himself that contradicts what He has already revealed in Scripture. He speaks to give application of his Word to the specific circumstances of your life.

We are also encouraged to experience God personally. God created us for fellowship with Him.

Jn 17:3

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. NASU

1Jn 1:1-3

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life –

2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us –

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. NASU

Jn 14:23

23 Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.

NLT

In order to have a living relationship with someone you must communicate with them. It is important for us to clearly understand what God is communicating to us and to know how to respond appropriately.

II. God Speaks

The Old Testament

- Creation – Ps 19:1-2

A voice in the garden –

God's voice created earth/vegetation/animals

God spoke to Adam/Eve in the cool of the garden.

His words formed God's character in their hearts – He taught them and communicated His heart to them.

Satan caused them to doubt God's voice.

Sin separated them from God – when they heard His voice fear rose in their hearts.

When we are right with God, His voice brings peace/joy/comfort.

When we are separated by sin, His voice brings fear/dread/conviction.

- Angels – sent by God as messengers (warn Lot, comfort Daniel in the lions' den, comfort Hagar concerning Ishmael)
- Prophets – relayed messages from God (Amos 3:7) A true prophet knew what was in God's heart and mind and communicated it to people.
- Dreams – Jacob, Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel – Dreams were never sought by the recipients; came at God's initiative at unexpected moments: dreams involved matters of great significance.
- Visions – those receiving visions were awake. Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
- Casting Lots – used to determine God's will. Land of Canaan was distributed by casting lots. Saul was chosen king by casting lots.

Pr 16:33

33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.
NASU

- Urim and Thummin – were sacred objects used as a means of determining God's desire in matters critical to the Israelite nation. They were kept in the breastplate of the high priest. Probably similar to casting lots.
- Gentle voice – Elijah (in the cleft of the rock – still, small voice), Samuel

1Sa 3:10

10 Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening." NASU

- Fire – Mt. Carmel, at the dedication of Solomon's temple
- Burning Bush - Moses
- Preaching – Jonah to the city of Nineveh
- Judgments – military defeat, famine, drought, plagues, earthquakes
- Symbolic actions – Isaiah (walked around naked and barefoot as a sign of the future fate of Israel), Hosea (married a harlot as a sign of Israel's harlotry toward God)
- Signs – parted the Red Sea, parted the Jordan River, names of children
- Miracles – Moses' signs to Pharaoh
- Writing on the wall – a warning to Belshazzar of Babylon of coming judgment
- Donkey – warning to Balaam
- Trumpet

Ex 19:16

16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. NASU

- Thunder and lightning, smoke and storms

Deut 5:23-25 The people begged to not hear the voice of God and for God to let Moses be their spokesman. **Why were they afraid of God's voice?** After that God used prophets and priests to hear God for them.

- Fleece - Gideon
- Sound of marching in the treetops

2Sa 5:23-24

23 When David inquired of the LORD, He said, "You shall not go *directly* up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.

24 "It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the LORD will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines." NASU

- Face-to-face - Moses

Ex 33:11

11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. NASU

- Personal guidance – Nehemiah

Ne 2:12

I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem... NASU

Ne 7:5

Then my God put it into my heart... NASU

- Various unspecified ways – “God spoke to Noah,” “The Lord said to Moses,” “The Lord said to Samuel,” “the word of the Lord came to Hosea”

The New Testament –

- Jesus - When Jesus came to earth, God continued to reach out to people, yet there was a new dimension to His communication.

Heb 1:1-2

1 Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.

2 And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. NLT

Jesus speaks for the Father.

Jn 14:10

10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. NASU

Jesus was not just another means of God communicating His Word. Jesus was – and is – God’s Living Word.

Jn 1:14

So the Word became human and made his home among us. NLT

Jesus’ words resulted in miracles.

- Risen Christ – to those who came to the tomb, on the road to Emmaus, the disciples in the upper room, Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, John on the isle of Patmos
- Nature – Romans 1 declares that God has revealed Himself in creation
- Angels – Mary, Joseph, Zacharias
- Dreams – to warn the magi, to warn Joseph to go to Egypt
- Visions – Ananias to go to Saul, Peter on the rooftop of unclean animals

Ac 22:18

Paul said.... I saw a vision of Jesus saying to me, 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem, for the people here won't accept your testimony about me.'
NLT

- Prophets – Agabus warned Paul of his arrest in Jerusalem, listed as one of the gifts of the Spirit
- Lot casting – the disciples cast lots to choose who would take Judas's place as an apostle
- Signs and wonders – Jesus performed signs to convince people that he was the Christ
- Preachers – Peter, Paul, Apollos
- Scripture – Jesus used scripture to overcome Satan, Jesus opened his disciples' minds to understand the Scriptures
- An unbeliever – the high priest Caiaphas, and enemy of Christ, spoke truth to the council
- The church

Ac 4:31

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. NLT

- A direct word from the Father – at the Baptism of Christ, on the Mount of Transfiguration
- The Holy Spirit – was sent by the Father to:
 - guide Christians, convict them of sin,
 - teach them God's ways, reveal God's truth,
 - testify of the truth of Christ,
 - reveal the Father's thoughts,
 - teach us how to pray
- Various unspecified ways – “The Spirit said to Philip,” Paul and Timothy were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia.”

III. Conclusion

God has communicated with people throughout the Scriptures. God did not limit Himself to one way of communicating.

Kim Clement - “We must be careful that we are not distracted by the form and miss the voice.”

There are many forms that God can use to deliver His message to you.

Remember that all believers have access to the throne of God. We can all hear God’s voice for ourselves. God may still send someone to you or use some other means to confirm His word to your heart.

Kim Clement – “Every time God speaks to you... His creation is at work. It’s like a burst of energy that explodes within your spirit. Suddenly, you possess something you did not have before.”

What did you notice about the ways God spoke to people during biblical times?

Are there ways that God might speak to you that you might not have considered before?