

Hearing From God



How God Spoke in the Old Testament

How God Spoke in the New Testament

How God Speaks Today

The Christian Experience - What Can I Expect?

- How Will God Speak To Me?

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27

Prepared for the Equipping the Saints, Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden

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HEARING from GOD – WORKBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps you've had questions about hearing from God.

- Does God really speak to people apart from the Bible?
- Would God actually speak to me?
- How would He speak and how would I know if it were really Him?

This 4-week course will examine a number of experiences of people within the pages of the Bible who heard from God. It will describe the pertinent details of their "hearing". As these details are examined, the reader will begin to learn how to hear from God for themselves.

Each Christian must learn to discern how God speaks and leads them individually.

No two Christian experiences are exactly the same, especially in this area of "Hearing from God."

As a start, let's consider the following three illustrations from Scripture:

One morning, a young teenage girl living at home with her parents got out of bed prepared to do her daily chores in the family. As far as she knew, it was another day, working around the house and tending the sheep in the field. She would faithfully do her chores as she usually did.

However, while tending the flocks, she met a man from a foreign country who told her strange and remarkable things. Through conversations with her family it was realized that she was hearing from God.

She was so convinced that she had heard from God that the very next day she was on the road south, taking a 400 mile trip by camel with a man she didn't know that would change her life forever.

1. How did she know the words of the stranger were from God?

A trusted servant of a very wealthy man was sent on an important project. Upon arriving at his destination, he prayed. Before the day was finished, he had heard from God and knew that his mission would be successful.

2. How did he hear from God?

A man who was 130 years old was really scared. He was facing the possibility of a lengthy trip and wasn't sure if this was the right thing to do. He went to a place

where his father had built a place of worship hoping that God would speak to him.

God did speak with him. And, after hearing from God, he was now at peace and knew that it was the right decision to take the trip.

3. How did God speak to him?

Each of these 3 people heard from God but each in different ways.

Lesson #1

Topics for Lesson #1

- I. "the man with 2 weeks to live"
- II. Major areas of communication
- III. Answers to 6 questions in the introduction
- IV. Examples from the Bible
- V. How God spoke in the OT and the NT

Other topics in this course:

1. Misconceptions
2. Preparing to hear from God
3. Recognizing the voice of God
4. 16 personal experiences

I. The man with 2 weeks to live: 3 words

The man in this account was in a hospice with 2-6 weeks to live. A request was received at CCW to send a pastor to visit with the man because he was afraid and unprepared to die.

In preparation for the visit, the pastor heard from God in the following ways:

- A. through an authority figure,
- B. John 3:16 inner quickening – not a voice, but came to his mind. The sense of this word was to use John 3:16 as the basis for the conversation. (which was subsequently used effectively)
- C. spiritual warfare - an attack on his thought life (The enemy of our souls did not want this man to be visited.)

Result: a man who would die in 2 weeks invited Christ into his life.

Further quickenings during the visit: (Words of Knowledge)

1. Nothing can separate you from the love of God.
2. All the angels rejoice.
3. Clean slate – all is forgiven
4. The devil will try to create doubt about your salvation experience.

Characteristics of God in His speaking:

As we survey the ways that God speaks, we will become aware of several characteristics of God:

- His sovereignty – He speaks to people in the ways and times that He chooses.
- His omnipresence – He is not limited to time and space. He can speak to you any where, any time.
- His omniscience – His all-knowing, all wisdom – He speaks in the ways that are appropriate for the occasion and person. e.g. Balaam, Saul, Samuel
- His immutability – He doesn't change. Some of the out workings may change, but the fact that He does communicate with His children hasn't changed.

II. Major Areas of Communication:

1. God speaks audible words - 'amar: to say, to speak, to utter
2. the revealed, written Word - Bible = "biblos" refers to papyrus, scrolls or books
3. Personal
 - A. Internal – what we experience within (Since the H.S. dwells within, we can expect communication from Him within.)
 - thoughts
 - "put it on my mind" (Nehemiah)
 - inner witness, both positive and negative (discernment)
 - state of our heart
 - troubled
 - at peace
 - a song
 - B. External – what we experience externally:
 - circumstances, e.g. "closed door"
 - answered prayer
 - teachers and preachers
 - authorities
 - o boss
 - o police
 - o parents
 - trusted brothers and sisters that you know hear from God
 - music

Have you experienced God speaking to you in any of these ways?

III. The 6 Questions from the Introduction:

The story of Rebekah

One morning, a young woman (Gen. 24:16)

na'ara = girl, young woman, infancy to adolescence
likely 13-15 years of age

living at home with her parents got out of bed prepared to do her daily chores in the family. As far as she knew, it was another day, working around the house and tending the sheep in the field. She would faithfully do her chores as she usually did.

However, while working with the flocks she met a man from a foreign country who told her strange and remarkable things. Through conversations with her family it was realized that she was hearing from God.

She was so convinced that she had heard from God that less than 24 hours later, she was on the road south, taking a 400 mile trip by camel that would change her life forever. (Gen. 24)

1. How did she know the words of the stranger were from God? a. The witness of those in authority over her, her father and brother. b. Although it is not specifically stated, I believe that she too had a witness about it in her heart. This would be absolutely essential as she left everything she knew for everything she didn't know.

They asked her and her immediate reply was: "I will go."

I find it incredible that a young girl, barely a teenager, is willing to leave her home, travel 400 miles with a stranger she has just met to marry a man she has never seen. (unless she has something very powerful, such as the Word of God, within)

What would you ladies (in the class) have done if you had been faced with a similar decision?

What possible explanation could there be for such a risky decision?

You might postulate riches or adventure. But this is huge. This is life-changing.

The only plausible explanation I have is: She knew she had heard from God.

The story of Abraham's servant

This is the same story as the previous story of Rebekah. The stranger Rebekah had just met was Abraham's trusted servant.

A trusted servant of a very wealthy man was sent on an important project. (possibly Eliezer of Damascus; Gen. 15:2) Upon arriving at his destination, he prayed. Before the day was finished, he had heard from God and knew that his mission would be successful.

2. How did he hear from God? Specific answered prayer (Gen. 24)
What was the condition to confirm an answer to his prayers? (Gen 24:4)

Question? What can we say about his answer to prayer? He knew God had answered his prayer. There was no doubt in his mind. The kindness shown to water his 10 camels (figure 20 gallons per camel X 10 X 8.33 pounds/gal = 1600 pounds of water to be drawn) was a formidable task for a seasoned shepherd let alone a young, Hebrew daughter. And him, a stranger in the area.

The story of Jacob Gen. 46: 1-4

A man who was 130 years old was really scared. He was facing the possibility of a lengthy trip and wasn't sure if this was the right thing to do.

The 11 brothers had returned from their 2nd trip to Egypt with the news that Joseph was alive.

Further, Joseph had invited them to come to Egypt and he would take care of them.

His concerns:

He was concerned about going to Egypt.

He knew that Abraham had gone to Egypt and had difficulties. ("She is my sister." – Gen. 12:4-20)

He knew the famine was only in the 2nd year so there would be at least 5 more years of famine. So it would be a lengthy stay. (Gen. 45:9-11)

He had a lot of possessions. Should he leave them behind?

He was definitely worried about his own health in making such a trip (over 200 miles).

Canaan, where he lived, was the land of promise.

How could he leave the land to which God had led his grandfather Abraham?

He went to a place where his father had built a place of worship hoping that God would speak to him.

3. How did God speak to him?

God did speak ('amar) with him with words in a vision of the night. And, after hearing from God, he was now at peace and knew that it was the right decision to take the trip. God told him several things: "I will be with you. I will bless you. I will bring you back. Joseph will close your eyes." God told him everything he needed to know.

Each of these 3 people heard from God but in different ways. And, they knew God had spoken.

4. Does God really speak to people apart from the Bible? Yes, and in many different ways, as He chooses.
5. Would God actually speak to me? Yes, and He will. As a born-again Christian, you have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you and He, too, is a communicator.
6. How would He speak and how would I know if it were really Him? We will discuss the answer to this question in subsequent classes.

Part of the answer to this question is that each of us is responsible to learn how God speaks to us.

I plan to give you some information in the remaining lessons that will help you to learn the ways in which God speaks to you personally.

IV. Examples from the Bible

1. Abraham

Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-18 "the Lord said ('amar) to Abraham" ('amar = to speak, to say to utter)

Gen. 15:1 "the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision"

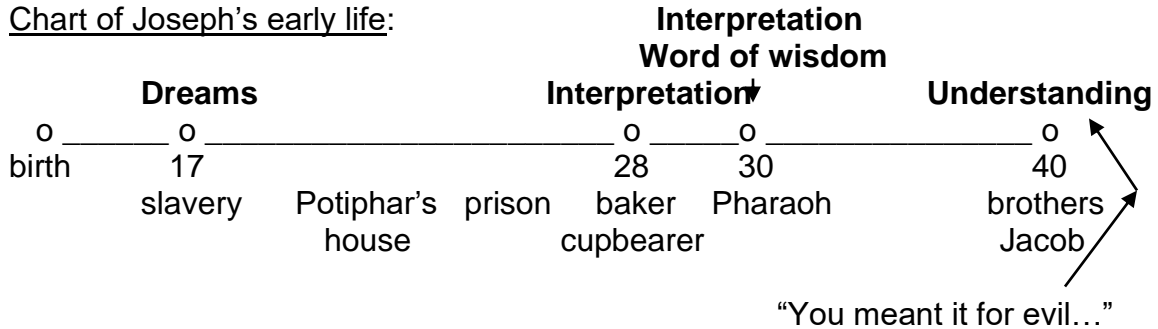
Gen. 17:1 "the Lord appeared to Abram and said"

In all of these verses, it's the same word 'amar.

God spoke to Abraham in audible words.

2. Rebekah – see announcement answers in Section III of this lesson
3. Abraham's servant – see announcement answers in Section III of this lesson
4. Joseph - Gen. 37, 40, 41 – dreams, interpretation of dreams

Chart of Joseph's early life:



Joseph – dreams as a teenager into slavery at 17.
 Potiphar's house as a slave
 Betrayed by Potiphar's wife
 In the dungeon.
 Interpretations for the baker and cupbearer
 2 years later – stood before Pharaoh
 Total time in slavery – 13 years

How did God speak to Joseph? Dreams
 Interpretations
 Word of wisdom – He instantly knew what to do with the dreams.
 Understanding – “You meant it for evil, God meant it for good.” (Gen. 50:20)

What else did he do that positioned him to hear from God? His work
 - in Potiphar's house
 - in the dungeon
 - for Pharaoh – He immediately went out into all of the land.

There is no evidence in scripture that God had spoken to him at other times.

But all the time he was in Egypt, as he did his work, God did his work within Joseph; until he was ready, prepared for his great calling as the savior of Israel and Egypt.

And then, God's plan became clear to him.

We don't know how God revealed it to him, but we do know that God did his work in Joseph as he was faithful to do his work.

The underlying lesson in all of this is: We need to do our work and God will communicate to us what we need to know when we need to know it.

One day, Joseph was a slave, in the dungeon.
 The next day, he was #2 in the kingdom.
Sometimes, God moves very quickly in the lives of His servants.

What a testimony to someone who was faithful to do his work.

V. How God Spoke in the Old and New Testaments

#	Person	Reference	Mode of Speaking	God's Patterns*
	Old Testament			
1	Abraham	Gen. 12, 13, 15, 17	God spoke ('amar) to him.	A, B, C, D, E, F, G
2	Abraham's Servant	Gen. 24	Specific, fulfilled prayer	A, B, F
3	Rebekah	Gen. 24	Her authorities, & possibly her personal witness	A, B, D, F, G
4	Jacob	Gen. 46:1-4	God spoke in a vision of the night	A, B, E, F
5	Joseph	Gen. 37, 40, 41	Dreams, interpretations, word of wisdom, understanding	A, B, C, E, F
6	Moses	Ex. 3, 8 (go to Pharaoh)	Burning bush, a voice	A voice and a manifestation
7	Balaam -a diviner from Pethor – "A soothsayer" "The Man"	Num. 22-24 \$\$ and God still spoke to him and through him	The Lord put a word in his mouth, also the donkey. Why did God choose to speak to Balaam this way?	God can use whomever or whatever He chooses.
8	Nebuchadnezzar	Dan. 2, 4 (like an animal for 7 yrs.)	Troubling dreams A physical change	The huge statue
9	Belshazzar	Dan. 5	Handwriting on the wall (interpretation)	
10	Samuel	I Sam. 3:4ff	The Lord spoke to Samuel	Qara – to call out, to cry aloud: Spoke ('amar)
11	Nehemiah	Neh. 2:12	"put in my heart to do" (NKJV)	
12	Elijah	I Kgs. 19:11-14	"a still small voice"	

	New Testament			
1	Disciples, crowds	Heb. 1:1-2	Jesus spoke to people	
2	Disciples	Gospels	Jesus spoke to many after His resurrection	
3	All peoples	Rom. 1:18ff	Nature testifies of His power and Deity	Ps 19 “no speech nor language where their voice is not heard” “Their line goes out into all the world.”
4	Mary Zacharias	Lk. 1:26 ff Lk. 1:5ff	An angel: “said to her...” “said to him...”	
5	Magi Joseph	Matt. 2:12 Matt. 2:14	dream – don’t go back to Herod dream – go to Egypt	
6	Ananias Peter	Acts 9:10-12 Acts 10:9-17	vision – Saul vision – clean and unclean (Cornelius)	
7	Crowds/people	Jn. 20:30-31	Signs and wonders (Jesus)	
8	Crowds/people	Rom. 10:14	preachers	How shall they hear without a preacher?
9	The council of Jews	Jn. 11:49-53	Truth revealed through an unbeliever (Caiaphas)	“one should die for the people”
10	Those present at Jesus’ baptism	Lk. 3:22	A direct word from heaven	
11	Phillip	Acts 8:29	“The Spirit said to Phillip...”	
12	Paul and Silas	Acts 16:6	“They were forbidden by the Spirit to preach the word in Asia” – no indication of specifics	
13	Paul	Acts 21:10-11	Prophetic word from Agabus	

* See lesson 2, Section I for explanations of God’s patterns which can be discerned in the examples of people who heard from God.

Homework assignment – review 5 of the examples in the chart above and determine which of God’s patterns are present. See items 1 and 3 as examples.

Lesson #2

Last week, we began our course by looking, in some detail, at the lives of several OT saints. The purpose was to review and determine how God has spoken to people in the past. What better place can we go to get the data for our analysis than to the inspired, authoritative Word of God and to the workings of His Holy Spirit in the lives of His people.

As we evaluate these examples, we can gather some information which will be useful in identifying how God might speak to us.

This week: I. Review from lesson #1
II. Principles of God's Speaking

I. Review from Lesson 1:

From our examples last week of Abraham, Abraham's servant, Jacob, Rebekah, Joseph and Moses, we can begin to make some specific observations about God's speaking:

- A. **Personally:** He spoke to individuals and he spoke a personal word to them.
- B. **Uniquely:** His specific words were tailored to their unique and specific circumstances.

How many records of burning bushes do we have?
How many servants have gone in search of a bride for their master's son and received confirmation such as did Abraham's servant?

- C. **Progressively:** In some cases, for example: Abraham, Joseph, Jacob, He only revealed what they needed to know at the time.

His first word to Abraham was to leave his home town.

Question? If Abraham had not obeyed this word, would God have given him another Word?

Once he obeyed the first instruction, God would speak again.

And now, we begin to formulate some ideas about **preparing to hear from God:**

Have you obeyed the word He has already given you?

Personal example: “go to Wilmington” – If we would have said no, I would never have received the word to retire 4 ½ years earlier than I had planned.

D. **Consistently:** He always speaks in a manner which is consistent with:

- His character (holy)
- His revealed Word
- His purposes/plans

He will never speak to us in a way that is inconsistent with His character.

e.g. When Israel strayed into idolatry, God’s prophets spoke words of rebuke and judgment. This is consistent with God’s character of holiness.

God would not have spoken words of comfort and encouragement. They needed a swat on the behind, not a pat on the head.

What if God had said: “I know you are weak in this area and I’m going to overlook it this time, just don’t do it again.”

Is that the voice of a holy God? No! This would not be consistent with His character of holiness. He does not overlook or excuse our sins.

e.g. A man falls in love with a woman who is not his wife. He reasons: God must have allowed this or caused it to happen. Therefore, He must want me to divorce my wife and marry this lady. After all, she really makes me feel appreciated and we get along so well together. It must be a word from God.

What’s wrong with this? God hates divorce. He would never lead you to be unfaithful to your mate with whom you have entered into covenant.

Did you know it’s easy to fall in love with someone else?

On this topic: Be cautious of a word from a young man who tells the lady of his dreams that God has told him “She is the one.” (especially if she herself has not heard such a word.)

It can happen...but both parties need to hear it and bear witness with it. In cases like this, it would be wise to exercise caution and submit the word to parents and/or leaders of the local church for authentication. (I have encountered this word several times (not in my own case) and most of the time it has been self-inspired.

E. **Faithfully:** When he gave Joseph the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph could hang his hat on it. It was guaranteed to happen. But also, God gave him understanding that would help Egypt to prepare for the famine.

F. **Unmistakably:**

When God spoke to people such as Abraham, Jacob, and Abraham's servant, they knew what God was saying. And they knew that He had spoken.

They had an inner confidence that enabled them to obey His leading with boldness. Note the determination and single-mindedness of Abraham's servant when Rebekah's relatives tried to deter him from an immediate departure.

G. **Reveals our heart:**

People's hearts were revealed.

Moses: "I am slow of speech. Why don't you send someone else to be the spokesperson?" Ex. 4:13 (He was fearful.)

Sarah: She laughed (in disbelief) and then she lied. Gen. 18:12-15

Zacharias: Did not believe the word about his wife, whose biological clock had already passed the time of child-bearing, that she would have a child? Did he know the story of Abraham (Sara conceived when Abraham was 99)? I think so. Zacharias, a priest, would have been very familiar with this biblical account.

II. Principles of God's speaking:

1. He speaks to whomever he will.
2. He speaks in whatever manner He chooses. Even a donkey can be His "spokes animal." (Caution: If God speaks to you through a donkey, I suggest that you should immediately be suspicious that something is significantly wrong in your spiritual life.)
3. His timing is impeccable. See story of Rebekah (Gen. 24)
4. Since God created us for fellowship with Himself (Jn 17:3), we can conclude that He desires an intimate personal relationship with us, and that means communication.

5. The evidence of Scripture indicates that He spoke individually to persons when they needed a “Word from God.”
6. He even speaks to people who were not seeking Him, for example: Abraham, Gideon, Saul, Belshazzar (handwriting on the wall)

III. Observations:

1. God still speaks to us today in ways that are similar to those we see in the Bible.
2. The people displayed in the Bible are, for the most part, not exceptions but examples to us as to how God speaks (e.g. except Moses, Paul) –How many burning bushes or blinding lights do people see today – but...it could still occur.
3. Each person needs to learn from God how He speaks to them.
4. God speaks to us in a variety of ways.
5. You will often hear from God when you are at work in the kingdom.
- e.g. when I’m teaching, I’m a channel for the blessing of God to flow.
He will reveal the things needed by his people.
How often have you heard a pastor say he felt led to talk on a topic that he hadn’t prepared and later learned that it met a specific need in the body.
6. Principally, I look to hear from God when I’m in the Word.
7. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within us, I would expect that the second most common way we would hear from God would be some manifestation of the Spirit within us.

LESSON 3

Today's Lesson: Misconceptions about hearing from God

In the creation week, God reveals Himself as the "God who speaks." He spoke and that which was not came to be out of that which was not.

When He created the man and woman, we see him speaking to them (1:28 – 30)

In 2:16-17 - 1st command

3:8 "the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day"
Something they had probably done on a regular basis.

When sin came, their fellowship, their communication was broken.

But, God sent Jesus to die for our sins so our fellowship with God could be reinstated. And this means communication, speaking one to another.

However, we are still entrapped in a fleshly, sinful body, not like the one Adam originally had which allowed him into God's presence.

But, God has provided ways of communication with Him until the total redemption of our bodies occurs. He communicates with us by the Holy Spirit, through circumstances, through the inner witness of our spirit, at times by His speaking voice and through various other ways.

When you become a Christian, you put yourself in the position of hearing from God.

And, the testimony of scripture is sure, that God wants to communicate with every one of His children.

You can hear from God.

Our task is to learn to recognize how God communicates with us as individuals.

But, also know that our enemy doesn't want us to hear from God and will use his "deceptions" (also known as wiles) to try and make us believe God has spoken when He hasn't. This calls for discernment.

Following are some of misconceptions regarding how God speaks and leads:

- A. God tells me what to do all of the time. (If I surrender to God, He will micromanage my life.)

There is no indication in scripture of God constantly telling people what to do, step-by-step, every day.

God is not making robots.

He is glorified when we study His Word and make wise decisions based upon the principles of His Word and that will please Him.

People who want God to tell them every decision to make will stay immature.

God could, but he won't because He knows that at some point, you have to let go of the baby and let him learn to walk on his own. At some point, the bird will need to leave the nest and fly on his own.

E. Stanley Jones states: "I believe in miracle, but not too much miracle, for too much miracle would weaken us, make us dependent upon miracle instead of obedience to natural law. Just enough miracle to let us know He is there, but not too much lest we depend on it when we should be depending on our own initiative and on His orderly process for our development."

God is glorified when we exercise our free will to walk righteously.

B. It's all in the Bible.

God, in His Word, gives general principles. Many of the specific circumstances of our lives are not dealt with in the Bible:

- o what to eat for dinner
- o which small group to join
- o which song to sing
- o which verse to take as a text
- o what school to go to
- o who to marry
- o where to live
- o what job to take
- o how to raise your children – Not all of the details are in the Bible.

Ask the class: What do you know about raising children from the Bible?

- raise them in the fear and knowledge of God.
- Prov. 1:8 father – instruction; mother – law
- Prov. 1:10 if sinners entice you – teach them how to resist sin and how to choose their friends
- Prov. 1: 15 don't walk with sinners
- Prov. 2: 1ff how to get the fear of the Lord
- Prov. 3:5 trust in the Lord with all your heart
- Prov. 3:11 don't despise the disciplines of the Lord
- Prov. 5 "the peril of adultery"

Prov. 6 surety, laziness, discerning the wicked man
by his mouth, eyes, fingers and feet

How about when and how to discipline the children?
Or...who is telling the truth?

Our reality is that there are times when there is no specific detail in scripture to direct our decision. Our task, seek God and exercise the wisdom He has given us. Also, I like to use "There is wisdom in the multitude of counselors" when it is appropriate. (Prov. 11:14)

C. Whatever comes. ("Whatever will be, will be.")

Whatever will be is dependent upon my choices.

Men are in prison because of choices they made, not because somehow God has strangely pre-decided that they would commit a crime and get 15 years in jail.

Everything that happens to us is not God's will; although, He does screen each circumstance and, at times, allows the difficult situation to enter our lives when it serves His purposes.

Often, I am in the position of choosing what will come to me. Does this mean that whatever I choose will be God's will?

Ex. 32:10 If God had proceeded with His plan, He would have destroyed Israel.

Important to note:

God was not playing a game with Moses just to test him. It was God's very real intention to destroy Israel.

But also, God knew His covenants with the patriarchs and would not break His word to them. It would appear that He used Moses' prayer to uphold His own purposes.

Not only did Moses not accept whatever was to come, he was instrumental in Israel being spared. Otherwise, we might have had a nation of Mosesites instead of Israelites.

Many things come that are not God's will.

He doesn't desire that any perish, but some do.

Wars that kill, maim and cripple people are not God's will but they happen.

People often blame God for bad things that happen to them.

We've all heard people asking the question: "Why did God allow this?" when they don't even give God the time of day.

The reason that bad things happen in the world is because of sin.

D. Bible roulette

Basically: open the Bible at random and point your finger to a verse without looking. This verse, then, provides God's Word for your situation.

This is not a procedure recommended by the Bible.

We are guided by scripture to ask, seek and knock. (continuous action)

We are invited in the Lord's prayer to petition God for our needs.

Bible roulette is used by people who won't take the time to seek God, study His Word and wait upon Him for the answer. This "modus operandi" is a fruit of our 21st century "I want it now" society.

LESSON #4

Today's Lesson: I. Qualities of God's voice
II. Preparing to hear from God
III. Experiences in hearing from God
IV. The ways God communicates with His people in the Old and New Testaments

I. Qualities of God's Voice

John 10:2-4 "The shepherd of the sheep...calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... He goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice."

The sheep learn the voice of their shepherd very quickly. They don't need a device or a voice meter to analyze the voice scientifically. They simply recognize it when they hear it.

We learn to know God's voice by experience.

Three lights:

1. the Word
2. circumstances
3. the inner witness

None of these by themselves can constitute a confirmation of the Word. The fact that circumstances line up (without the other lights) is not a confirmation.

Discuss the qualities and variations in a voice

Certain factors distinguish the voice of God just as any human voice can be distinguished from another.

- a quality of sound (tones that are produced, the way they are modulated)
This also includes slow or fast, smooth or halting, indirect or to the point.

e.g. God is always to the point. He does not waste words. He does not engage in idle chatter.
- authority the weight or impact an impression makes on our consciousness. We sense inwardly the immediate power of God's voice.

There is a steadiness and calm force with which His voice impacts our soul and inclines us towards assent and active obedience.

The inner voice of God does not argue, does not try to convince you.

It speaks and is self-authenticating.

God's voice can also be distinguished by the effects it has on you and others around you.

- a certain spirit:

e.g.:

passionate, confident and commanding, versus timid, coaxing or manipulative and cold.

God's voice has the spirit of exalted peacefulness and confidence, of joy, of reasonableness and good will.

It does not need to be loud or hysterical.

The vocal impression will be loving and warm but firm.

content or information -

God's voice will always conform to and be consistent with the truths about God's nature and kingdom that are made clear in His Word.

It will never tell us to engage in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with the Scriptures.

God's speaks with decisiveness and not with uncertainty.

Road to Emmaus – “when He spoke...our hearts burned within us”

Final task of Jesus – For 3 years, He had spoken to them face to face. Now, they had to learn to hear the voice of the Spirit within them instead of His audible voice.

II. Preparing to Hear from God:

1. The new birth >>> the Holy Spirit, our counselor and guide (a communicator)
2. Clean sin slate
3. Waiting before God
4. Quiet spirit, peace – eliminate unnecessary distractions
Know when you're at peace, at rest internally – sensitive to heart and mind
5. Goal – honor and obey (no matter what the word)
6. Heart to serve/heart to love
7. Openness and willingness to learn
8. Position of serving in the kingdom (be a channel)
9. Doing your secular work (e.g. Rebekah, Joseph)

III. Christian experiences in hearing from God:

1. inner peace, quiet, rest (important for each of us to know when we are at rest)
2. A song in your heart – a sign of peace and of relationship
3. words of wisdom, words of knowledge (when praying for or counseling people)
4. something on your mind/heart to do (e.g. Nehemiah)
5. gives understanding in the Word
6. gift of mercy/compassion – initiated by the Spirit within
7. guides servant preparations – e.g. times pastors talk about the same topics/passages without having consulted each other.
8. through the Word – as you meditate
9. a changed heart
10. trusted prophetic people

11. An inner witness, assurance, confidence (sometimes a negative feeling)
12. A thought comes to mind to do something.
13. Occasionally, “the Holy ghost shivers” – a warm, sometimes emotional feeling from within; sometimes a weeping without knowing why
14. a voice within
15. Spiritual warfare –inner peace is disturbed – to let you know something is going on.
16. dreams

IV. The Ways God Communicates with His people:

From the Old Testament

1. Creation
2. A spoken word
3. Angels
4. Prophets
5. Dreams/Visions
6. Lot casting
7. Urim and thummim
8. a still, small voice
9. fire
10. burning bush
11. preaching
12. thunder, lightnings, a trumpet, smoke and storms
13. judgments
14. symbolic actions
15. signs
16. miracles (turning a rod into a serpent)
17. handwriting on the wall
18. a donkey
19. inability to prophecy falsely
20. fleece
21. sound of marching in the treetops
22. face-to-face
23. personal guidance (Nehemiah – put it on his mind to do)

From the New Testament:

1. the risen Christ
2. nature
3. angels
4. dreams
5. visions
6. prayer
7. prophets
8. lot casting
9. signs and wonders
10. preachers
11. scripture
12. an unbeliever
13. the church
14. a direct word from the Father
15. the Holy Spirit
16. various unspecified ways

ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around

50-95, they called themselves the “Sonshiners”) and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.

A painting of a ship on a stormy sea with a bright light breaking through the clouds. The scene is dramatic, with dark, turbulent waves and a sky filled with heavy, grey clouds. A bright, golden light source, possibly the sun or moon, is breaking through a gap in the clouds, creating a strong glow and illuminating the scene. The ship is a large, multi-masted vessel, likely a sailing ship, positioned in the middle ground, struggling against the waves. The overall mood is one of struggle and hope.

**OTHER STUDIES
BY THIS AUTHOR**

Visit: PastorDavidBraden.com