

When God Speaks



Does God Really Speak?

The entire Bible reveals that God speaks to men & women, yet we live in an empirical age that is increasingly skeptical.

- Why do you think there are so many people, even in the church, who are skeptical, or even scoff, when they hear someone else say that God spoke/speaks to them?
 - a. They don't believe God speaks to people
 - b. They're thinking you mean God audibly spoke
 - c. They have never heard God for themselves
 - d. All of the above

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Jesus, John 10:14, 27

“Though most believers are comfortable speaking of a ‘personal relationship with Jesus,’ few concepts are so greatly celebrated and little experienced.”

Wayne Jacobson, *Tales of the Vine* (pg.73)

Your Theological Worldview Impacts Your Idea of Relationship

Who is God? Where is he? What difference does it make?

- 1. Pantheism** – God is in everything, everything is God; prayer is about getting in tune with self and nature (e.g. Eastern and Native American religions)
- 2. Deism** – God is a distant deity, creates & steps away; prayer calls across a void and hopes it is received (e.g. Enlightenment theism, Founding Fathers, etc.)
- 3. Biblical Theism** – God is transcendent, but present, as heaven and earth are overlapping & intersecting; prayer is participation in the marriage of heaven & earth

1 Samuel 3:1-4 NIV

¹ The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. ² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:4-7 NIV

Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

1 Samuel 3:8-10 NIV

⁸ A third time the LORD called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.

⁹ So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!”

Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Biblical Ways God Can Speak to You

According to the Bible, in what ways does God speak?

- 1. God speaks to us directly in an inward way.**
(e.g. Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, Paul, etc.)
- 2. God speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.**
(e.g. Josiah, Jesus, Peter, Paul, Ethiopian Eunuch, etc.)
- 3. God speaks to us through other people.**
(e.g. Nathan to David, Ananias to Saul (Paul), Peter to Cornelius, Paul to the Athenian philosophers, etc.)

Are you listening for God's voice?

Are you awake to what He's doing around you?

The Posture of a Listening Servant

If we want to hear God speak, we must be listening.
What is the posture of a listening disciple of Jesus?

- Our heart and mind must be open to hearing from God
- We need to be teachable, moldable & surrendered
- It requires *exercising* your spiritual capacity to hear God's voice in solitude, and in our everyday activities
- We allow space for God to speak to us in our prayers; we talk and then we listen, we listen and then we talk
- We are prepared to act and obey what we've heard

Hebrews 3:12-15 NIV

¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

¹⁵ As has just been said:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion.” *Ps 95:7-8

When God Speaks

“When God Speaks” reflection questions:

1. God is speaking to you all the time, how well are you listening and recognizing his voice?
2. God meets us where we are and usually speaks to us in ways that fit our personality and receptivity. Are you recognizing his patterns of speaking to you?
3. While you may have heard God speak one way, are you open to hearing him in other ways? Where is the Spirit calling you to grow in your relationship?
4. When God speaks, will you obey his word to you?

A man in a dark suit stands on the peak of a large, dark rock formation. The background is a vast, starry night sky with the Milky Way galaxy visible as a bright, colorful band of light stretching across the frame. The scene is illuminated by the ambient light of the stars and the galaxy.

When God Speaks

Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org