

Hearing God Part 2

Opening Scripture: Acts 10:1-8

A bit of context is important: this chapter describes how a Roman soldier called Cornelius, went from just being a 'good religious person' to becoming a true believer in Jesus.

- He was a devout man
- Feared God (Yahweh) with his family
- Gave money to the poor
- And prayed to God always (God, not *gods*).

He was a good man but still needed to meet the Saviour. God set a plan in motion so that this man could come to the knowledge of Jesus. We will see, as the story unfolds, how many different ways God used to communicate.

1. An angelic visitation

V.3 – *“About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision, an **angel of God**, coming in and saying to him, Cornelius”*

- a) **Hebrews 1:14** says that they are *ministering spirits*, often to protect (Psl91:10-12) but generally to bring a word from God, a message.
- b) **Hebrews 12:22** says that the believer is in the company of a multitude of innumerable angels.
- c) **Hebrews 13:2** says that angels of God sometimes show up as guests.

2. A vision

*“he fell into a trance and **he saw**” ...*
(Verses 9-12)

Prophets in the Old Testament were also called seers. A vision is when God allows you to see into the realm of the spirit or, as it is the case here, a vision can also be something symbolic. Joel prophesied that in the last days old men would dream dreams and young people would see visions (Joel 2:28).

3. An audible voice

“and a voice came to him”
(verses 13-15)

A voice spoke to him 3 times. God's insistence was met with resistance. Sometimes God raises His voice. Peter was chosen to tell Cornelius (who was a Gentile, a soldier of an occupying army) about Jesus. The message of the Gospel is not the message of angels but the message of the church.

4. The still small voice of the Holy Spirit

“While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him”
(verses 17-20)

This is the most common way God will lead us. This is not an audible voice. It is the quiet, inward voice of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

- a) We got saved listening to that voice (John 16:8 says that it is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin).
- b) After we got saved, it was also the Holy Spirit who gave us assurance of salvation (Romans 8:16). The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

In both instances we were hearing the Holy Spirit all along. We just didn't know it. That is how quiet that voice can be.

Paul said in **Acts 27:10**: "*men, I perceive that this voyage will end with much disaster and loss*"... - Sometimes that voice comes as subtle as an *impression*.

- c) As you grow in your relationship with God, you should be able to become better and better at finding and discerning His voice. Look at how accurately Peter understood what God was saying (verse 20): "*behold three men are seeking you. God down with them doubting nothing*". There was nothing vague about that instruction. It was all quite precise: "*three men are seeking you*".

See also **Acts 8:29, 13:2**.

- d) The Holy Spirit can also use what we know as 'the 9 gifts' (according to 1 Corinthians 12) to speak to us:
 - **Vocal** Gifts: Tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy
 - **Power** Gifts: Faith, healings and miracles
 - **Revelation** gifts: Word of wisdom, word of knowledge and discerning of spirits.

5. God can speak through men

"We are all present to hear the things commanded you by God"
(**verses 24, 33-35**)

God can use someone to speak to us. Peter had the word they needed to hear. God uses men as His instruments, as messengers of His word.

Ephesians 4:11-13 - ¹¹*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,* ¹²*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*

6. The Word

"The word which God sent to the children of Israel" ... "that word, you know".
(**verses 36-38**)

We have a written record of 'that word'.

God's written word provides the most immediate access to the thoughts, intentions and will of God. God's written word is God speaking to us. God's written word is also the basis for judging all other revelations. Visitations, visions, audible voices, impressions, what men say, etc, all of these have to ultimately line up with the written word.

.... And God confirms His word with signs and wonders:

Verse 44 - *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.*

Conclusion

Here are some of the biblical ways God communicates:

- Visitations of angels,
- Visions,
- Voice (audible),
- Voice of the Holy Spirit in our hearts,
- Voice of a man,
- The written word

It is God's prerogative how He chooses to speak – if in a spectacular way like a vision of an angel, or simply through an impression in our hearts. However, we should seek to hear what He is saying and determine to be led by Him.