

Are We Hearing God's Voice?

Part 1

www.lightontherock.com

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NKJV used throughout unless noted otherwise.

Abstract: Does Almighty God still speak directly to all His children – or to just a select few? Do you ever hear God speaking directly to you? This 2-part sermon defines what “hearing God” means, why it’s so important that we learn to hear His voice and then how to hone our spiritual hearing so we miss less and less. Using these concepts can change your life.

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TRACK 1 “Oh, if I could just hear God actually talk to me...to hear His voice. Wow, that would be so great, if God would just tell me what to do more often. Why don’t we ever hear from Him directly?”

Who *hasn't* said or thought those words at one time or another? Haven’t we all wished we could hear God speak directly and clearly to us? Wouldn’t that be cool?

Do you ever feel like we just don’t have it as great as the people in the Bible had it, or like the 12 disciples had it – who actually heard God or Jesus speak, walked with God, and saw wondrous miracles performed first hand by the very son of God? Does the Almighty still speak directly to His children – to you, to me, or is that a thing of the past? Or does Yahweh have to always talk to you and me through ordained ministers?

Greetings, children of the Highest. This is Philip Shields, your brother in Yahshua the Messiah. God has not lost His voice or gone mute. I assure you – Yahweh loves talking to His children and still talks to His children. He may be talking to you, but are you hearing everything Abba and our Redeemer are saying to you by the Spirit? I believe the Eternal God probably speaks more now than He ever has before – and yet many of His children *aren't* hearing God’s words or are tuning Him out. I believe many of us are missing much of what God is telling each of us – because we haven’t sharply honed our spiritual hearing skills.

The changed life is a life that actively seeks to hear God’s voice. It’s not just a matter of going to church or reading the Bible, but hearing God speak from His heart to yours.

This will be a 2-part sermon. Part 1 lays the vital foundation of understanding why we need to hear God, what “hearing God” means and who has that opportunity. Part 2 goes into how to fine tune our hearing of God’s voice, as well as why we lose “the signal” in the first place. Scripture actually tells us that our privilege and opportunities to hear God are

greater than what any prophet of old ever experienced, with the possible exception of 2-3, but even then, because of the Spirit, I believe we have the opportunity to hear God more than any previous generation. The question is: are we?

What an awesome experience that becomes – to know you're actually in tune with your very Creator and Abba, your father in heaven. As we go through this 2-part series, you'll see that Elohim speaks to us in many ways, way beyond Bible studies and sermons.

[Track 2] More critical in these last days

As we get ever closer to the very end of the end times, the literal last few days of the "last days" –it will be increasingly a matter of life and death that we be able to hear God's voice, know it's *God's* voice, understand it – and act properly on it! Our very life and death may hang in the balance on our ability to hear our Maker's instructions.

Things are definitely changing on the world scene. Presidents and prime ministers are calling for a New World Order more and more. Prime ministers from the UK, Australia, France and many other countries are calling for change. Barack Obama seems to be very popular around the world, and yet he has put the USA into deep debt with the so-called bail-out. I think we're watching the foundation being laid for one world government, one currency, and one military system. Watch what President Obama does and how the world reacts to Him. And watch what happens in Israel. I won't be surprised to see efforts to make Jerusalem an international city not owned by Israel or the Palestinians.

In these circumstances, we're going to have to know what to do. We'll have to be able to hear from Father and Master – and recognize the Master's voice. Our lives depend on it.

I just wanted to mention briefly too that there are lots and lots of messages on the website www.LightontheRock.com . Be sure to also check out the older messages—even those in 2004-2005. Some of my favorite sermons are the ones back then. Sermons are timeless.

Anyway, today we'll talk about what it means to hear God. We'll define it. We'll talk about why this is such an important topic. We'll identify who gets to hear God's voice and who doesn't. The next time, we'll also go in depth into how we can hear God. I hope this 2 part series can help you know you're hearing from Abba directly and personally. Since focusing on this topic, it has revolutionized my life.

[TRACK 3] WHAT "hearing God's voice" is NOT! Caution!

[In the audio of the message I cover this section in far more detail] First we have a strong caution: I'm not talking about wackos who do weird things because a voice told them to do something violent or weird. Scripture says we have to test the spirits.

Does the message we think is from God match what Scripture says? God doesn't change and doesn't contradict Himself. The fruit of doing the message must have a good ending, a good result and match to what we know of God's Way. If not, it probably is not from God.

On the other hand, sometimes the Eternal speaks to us through the most unexpected sources. God sometimes even uses the enemy. Remember Caiaphas, the high priest?

John 11:49-52

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us* that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

But normally speaking, if the "message", words, thoughts, impulses, ideas which we think are from God do *not* match with His word, then caution --- you may be getting an idea alright, but it's not from the one Living Eternal God.

In fact Yahweh himself condemns those who claim they "got a word from the Lord" – when He clearly says "I did not send them, I did *not* give them such a word". It's not uncommon in especially charismatic circles to hear people claim they "have a word from the Lord". One minister says he was told he could handle poisonous snakes, so he pulled out a rattlesnake, got bitten, and died. The message was not from God.

Jeremiah 14:14-15

And the LORD said to me, "*The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them;* they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets *who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send,* and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' – 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed!'"

In Jeremiah 23:32-40 Yahweh even says "I am against those who prophesy false dreams"...and continues "Yet I did not send them or command them". Jot that down and look it up. Sometimes someone may even get the date right – as in Deut 13:1-5 – but God says if he is not preaching according to God's law, that prophet had to be silenced.

But one more caution: its one thing to act on something for yourself when you feel you are being directed by your Maker, and quite another to tell someone else what he/she should do because you have a word from God.

So please listen to this sermon with God's *warning* as the "caution" we put into this potentially explosive topic. Don't go telling people, "I have a word from the Lord" unless you know without any doubt that Yahweh told you to tell people that message. You're on thin ice otherwise. I'd be even more careful about passing a "word" to others "from God" than I would be for what seems to be a message for me.

But if we learn to truly discern and hear God's true voice, this sermon may well become a launching pad for some unbelievably exciting times in your life. Just don't forget the caution I've just stated. There's much to cover, it will take 2 sermons, so let's get started.

[TRACK 4] Five reasons why it is so important to hear the Eternal God's voice

Before I spend time hearing a topic, I like to have it explained to me why I need to hear this topic. Here are five reasons why we must start to hear God, if He has opened our ears to do so. There could be dozens of good reasons. . . but here are 5.

1. **We must get good at hearing God's voice as He is the only One who knows perfectly what we need to do in our lives and how to guide us. We want to hear God's voice because we need Yahweh to direct our lives.** We need to know what to do and so we seek His will. We're like Solomon at the beginning of his reign asking God for wisdom, for help, for direction. We have this opportunity to be directed by Yahweh. It is an indescribable privilege.
2. Only those who Hear God's voice pass from death into Life. Hearing God is a life and Death matter.

John 5:24

"Most assuredly, I say to you, *he who hears My word and believes in Him* who sent Me *has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*

3. **Hearing His voice – and all that it means -- identifies us as sheep of His Flock.**

Jesus says He is the good and true Shepherd. He has a flock. His sheep know Him and hear His voice and recognize His voice. Knowing you and I are hearing God shows everyone that we are part of His flock.

John 10:1-5

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens [we are to be

watchmen by the door as well, ready to open the door to the Master when we hear HIS voice], **and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name** and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** ⁵ **Yet they will by no means follow a stranger,** but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

John 10:27-28 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

Yahshua (Jesus) said to Pilate: "Everyone who is of the truth hears my word". John 18:37. If we're not hearing his voice, are we "of the truth"? Are we sheep of His flock?

4. We want to hear God because we're going to be judged by the words and messages God sends us, whether we choose to receive those words or not.

John 12:46-50

⁴⁶ I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷ And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, * I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.* ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Jesus set the perfect example of tuning in to His Father and doing everything Father told Him. We in turn must listen for every nudge, every look, every message, every direction from our Husband-to-be. That's what Jesus did in relation to His father.

Over and over the Scriptures are clear: we are judged by according to how much we have been given. The parable of the Talents and the Parable of the pounds are 2 good examples. The ability to hear God Himself is a huge gift and we are being judged by how we are valuing that and using His gift.

Ancient Israel heard the Eternal's voice, promised to do all that he said – but in a very short time they had made a gold calf and were dancing to it and worshipping it! They heard, but they rebelled. They lost faith. Later, they feared the giants in the land. They constantly complained and grumbled. Are we doing any better than they? My point is, they heard God – and rebelled. So what happened?

If you're unfamiliar with the passage, please take the time to read Hebrews 3:7-11, 14-19 and Hebrews 4:4-7. In Hebrews 3 and 4, God says they hardened their hearts. Heb. 3:16 asks, "For who having heard, rebelled? Indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?"

It goes on to say that though they heard, they did not obey and so they "could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:17-18). The same consequence could happen to us, if we also don't hear and heed. We don't obey when we don't believe. They heard God's voice, they saw the pillar of cloud, they heard the faithful voices of Joshua and Caleb after spying out the land – but they didn't believe what they heard! So they were judged by it and not allowed to inherit the Promised Land.

The author of the book of Hebrews makes it very clear that we therefore should give the more earnest heed not to make the same mistake – and suffer the same consequence. Hebrews 4:7 – "today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts".

5. It gives Yahweh, our dear Abba in heaven, tremendous pleasure to know we hear Him – and all that "hearing Him" means, which we'll cover shortly.

When my children were very young, it gave me pleasure to know they heard me coming home from work. Maybe they heard my voice, or heard the garage door rolling up, or heard me whistling, or heard me call their name. A source of great joy for me, in turn, was to hear one of them chant/sing out – "Daddy's home, daddy's home..."

It works the other way too. I loved hearing their voices, and I enjoyed knowing they loved hearing my voice. If they weren't happy as I came home, perhaps they were afraid, or worried that I was angry or unhappy. Maybe they were in trouble or had done something wrong. But a loving child in a good relationship with Dad usually delights in seeing His father smile, hearing His father laugh, and knowing His father is happy. So we should also delight in knowing our dear Abba enjoys knowing we want to hear him. I'm going to read scripture to prove it in a second, but it only makes sense!

Listen to God's heart in this next passage. God has feelings too! He created feelings! Oh how we can bring Him joy, and how we can hurt Him. Listen to these verses and you tell me if you don't feel some of Abba's hurt. Listen to God's heart, His feelings, His passion, not just to His words:

Psalm 81:8-13

"Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you! *O Israel, if you will listen to Me!* ⁹

There shall be no foreign god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god.

¹⁰ *I am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your

mouth wide, and I will fill it. ¹¹ "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would *have* none of Me. [Ouch!] ¹² So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. ¹³ "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! ¹⁴ I would soon subdue their enemies, And turn My hand against their adversaries.

Read Zechariah 7:11-13 too. In there God says basically – "OK, you won't hear me? Then when you cry out to me, maybe I won't be so quick to hear you either." Of course we know He eventually will hear, but sometimes he let the Israelites stew in their problems for 40 years or more. Just read the book of Judges, for example. They'd rebel, God would allow the enemy to come in, they'd repent after 40 years or so, and then eventually Yahweh sends a deliverer.

Brethren, God's still the same way.

Isaiah 55:1-3

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? *Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good*, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ *Incline your ear, [cock your head! Cup your ear – listen carefully!] and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you — The sure mercies of David.*

Did you feel God's heart in those passages? Did you feel His desire? Did you feel His pain and disappointment when we don't seem to want to bother to hear Him? This is what I'm trying to get across. It's hearing God's *heart*. It's getting in synch with His mind, His messages, His way. Along the way God also blesses us as we hear and heed Him.

Almighty has not gone mute. He loves to talk to His children, and He IS talking to us. WE just have to learn to hear, and then to heed. Those are 2 different issues.

[TRACK 5] Are you sure you even *want* to hear God?

Are we so sure we really even want to hear God's voice? We all once did talk directly with our Maker, through our ancestors Adam & Eve. But they ultimately chose to listen to the Serpent instead. So they were thrown out of the Garden of Delights (Eden) and God spoke directly through, and to, chosen prophets only, after that.

Ancient Israel also got a chance to hear God's voice directly. I'm sure you remember that. But what happened? Israel decided they didn't want to hear God's voice directly after all. They chose an intermediary—Moses. When Yahweh thundered the 10 Commandments

from a quaking, shaking, Mt Sinai all ablaze, they were so terrified they didn't want to hear His voice again. Let's read about it in Exodus 20.

Exodus 20:18-19

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. **19** Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Sure enough, in Exodus 20:22 it says, "And the Eternal said to *Moses*, 'Say thus unto the children of Israel...'" So they got what they asked for. Ancient Israel now has to have an intermediary; virtually no direct contact. From then on, the general population never heard God directly – until the times of the new covenant and until He sent His own son.

In the new covenant, God no longer speaks to us through intermediaries like prophets and priests – except one mediator: His own son. But it seems many of God's children are still under the impression that if Yahweh needs to talk to us, He will do so solely through priests or ordained ministers. God does speak to us through His true ministers or other people, but brethren – God does not limit his communication with us by having to go through other people! I'll speak more about this in a few minutes. If you think you can't hear from God unless you go through another person, ordained or otherwise, you're missing a lot of God's desire to communicate directly with you.

Brethren, admittedly – that was the way it indeed was in the Old Covenant. But now it's different, and you have to believe it can be different for you too, or you won't experience what I'm talking about today.

Years ago, the Catholic Church even banned the general membership from reading the Bible for themselves. No, they had to go through the elite, the elite priests. Many ordained ministers still foster the idea that any insights, revelations, or words from God can come only through them. Some foster the idea that if God has a word for us, it will always come through the very top ministers. But brethren, all those who have God's spirit are a "royal priesthood" today, and there is but one mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

This misunderstanding – that God speaks only to ministers – could be behind the reason why so many aren't hearing God's voice directly.

So do you really want to hear God? If God is calling you, pray that He gives you spiritual hearing. Pray that God opens your ears to hear Him. Like the old hymn says:

"Open my ears that I may hear, voices of truth thou sendest clear, and while the wave notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear".

By the way, it is more the topic of part 2, but the song does go on to give a good clue to one way to better hear GOD: make your life quieter. Turn the noise level of our lives down. The song continues:

"Silently now I wait for thee, ready my God thy will to see".

Silently. Quietly. Even in prayer and Bible study – stop sometimes. In any interaction with any one, if one person does ALL the talking, he can't possibly hear much from the other person. In prayer, after speaking a while, be quiet. Be still. Wait. I know that goes against the grain of what many of us were taught – to have active, vocal, powerful prayer.

Don't forget some of the most powerful prayers ever recorded were quiet ones. Samuel's mother was fervent in her spirit as she prayed for a son, but the High Priest could only see her lips moving and could not hear her. Read it in 1 Samuel 1:8-13. So fervent prayer does not have to be loud prayer. 1 Samuel 8:13 says, "Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk."

Samuel's mother had a happy ending to her prayer if you read the story in 1 Samuel 1: she heard God's answer from the priest, and accepted it as God's answer, even though initially he thought she was drunk.

[TRACK 6] TODAY GOD SPEAKS TO EACH OF US THROUGH HIS SON

I'm going to develop this part of the sermon much more in part 2 of the sermon, but it's crucial I at least mention it now, because there is *no* communication with Yahweh, with Abba our Father, without this point: Today God speaks to each of us through His Son. We just have to learn the MANY ways He does that. Bible studies and sermons are only two of the ways.

Hebrews 1:1-2

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds..."

Did you hear that? God used to talk to us through prophets – but in these last days He talks to us through His own son, who happens to also be God (John 1:1-3). I will specify in careful detail *how* Yahweh speaks to us by His Son. Sure it *includes* hearing God in Bible study, in prayer, or through sermons and the like – but it's *so much* more than that.

At least twice in Jesus' ministry, the disciples heard a voice from heaven telling them, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear *Him*." Our heavenly Father says to listen to Him. The word "to hear" in the Greek can also be translated "obey". It's repeated at the transfiguration as well.

The author of Hebrews goes on to say how Yahshua is so much higher, so much greater than the angels (chapter 1), higher than Moses ever was, higher than the Aaronic

priesthood, even higher than the Temple system! Page through the book of Hebrews on your own and you'll see what I'm talking about. In fact, Hebrews says Jesus is the mediator of the new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

So Paul, or whoever wrote Hebrews, is saying – “Quit looking for a go-between, a mediator, other than the one we *do* have, the one mediator Christ, who is Himself also God, and is the very Son of the highest. There is *only one* mediator” (1 Tim. 2:5). Not Mary, His mother. Not other dead saints. Not angels – just Jesus, or Yahshua the Messiah as I prefer to refer to Him.

1 Timothy 2:5

For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,

In previous series I've spoken about what it means to be “in Christ” (or “In Yahshua”) and “in God”. I explained that in Yahshua is how we are also sanctified, glorified and able to come boldly into the holy of holies, to the mercy seat itself and speak to, and be able to hear, God himself. We died, and our lives are now in Christ, in God (Col. 3:3).

Be sure to hear that series, because *this* sermon won't work for you, in your life, unless you are first of all “in Christ”. In that series, I carefully showed how being “In Him” *includes* being a member of His elect, His true church of individuals who have been given His Spirit. But being “in Him” goes way beyond just being a member of a church. Way beyond.

[TRACK 7] Can anyone who wants to, “hear God”? Here's God's answer from Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2:7-14

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But as it is written: “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*”*

¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so *no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.* [jumping to verse 14 now)

¹⁴ *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

To hear God's word is a gift from God. It is not limited to certain nations, certain races. It's not even limited to adults. God often spoke through children, as we'll cover in part 2. You remember Samuel, Joseph, David, and others who were young when Almighty began

talking to them. So even if a child is hearing this sermon, let me say to you: yes, if God opens your hearing to hear Him, even you can hear God.

But no one can come to the Christ, or to the Father, unless God first calls him (John 6:65). God then brings this called one to His Son (John 6:44-45), who then focuses on teaching us and revealing to us the Father (Matthew 11:27). In my series about being "in Him", we see how it is "in Christ" – in His name and as part of His very body – that we are able to come into the literal presence of the Holiest, to God the Father Himself, but only in Him.

Not anyone who wants to, right now, can hear God's voice. I know that goes counter to 95% of preaching going on out there, but let's go by the scriptures on this.

This is also one reason why Jesus spoke in **parables** sometimes. Sometimes the parables *were* understood (for example Matt 21:45 – "Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.")

But most of the time it was for the specific purpose of *hiding* the truth from those not yet being called, because they *weren't* given ears that could hear. Even when Jesus asked Peter "Who do men say that I am?", when Peter gave the right answer, Jesus told them to keep that information to themselves for now. It wasn't the time for others to understand yet. My point is, we can't spiritually hear until God opens our hearing.

Matthew 13:10-17

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12** For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. **13** Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: '*Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive*'; **15** for the hearts of this people have grown dull. *Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should* heal them.*'* **16** *But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;* **17** *for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

John 8:43-47

Why do you not understand My speech? *Because you are not able to listen to My word.*

44 You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. **[skip to 47]** *He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."*

Pretty clear, isn't it? Unless we are "of God", we are not going to hear His words. This is why I had to focus on this groundwork first, before talking about hearing God. We have to be called, given God's spirit which unlocks the door to God's mind and way, and then be "of God", part of His flock and His people – or we simply won't hear the words of God.

Yahweh gives us the key to unlock the spiritual door: His Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit at least working *with* us (prior to baptism), or *in* us (after baptism), we cannot grasp spiritual things. It will all just seem like foolishness. Putting it another way, if you *do* grasp spiritual things, God's spirit *is* working with you.

When it comes to hearing God's voice, did the ancient prophets have it better than we do?

Luke 10:23-24

Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, "Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; **24** for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it*, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it*."

So Yahweh is still speaking. He has not gone mute. We are the ones who have let the signal fade, or have drifted off channel. *We're* the ones losing the art of hearing His voice – and we must regain that ability.

[TRACK 8] Now let's DEFINE what it means "to hear God's voice"

"Hearing God" obviously involves hearing a message by some means, some media God uses, which we'll carefully discuss especially in part 2. But it means much, much more than just hearing words or the message. I think many of us think when we open the Bible and do routine Bible study, or hear a reading of scripture in a perfunctory way, that we're "hearing God". I'm not going to minimize that, but I strongly believe God wants us to grasp far more than assuming a cursory reading of scripture is the same as "hearing God".

Its one thing to know Scripture inside and out – and quite another thing to "hear God" speak to you personally through His written Word or other means. (repeat) Many have

demonstrated good biblical knowledge – and yet fail to demonstrate the fruit of knowing Him, the fruit of His Spirit. I preach also to myself. Many people know the Book inside and out – but have failed to truly come to know the Author. Hearing God involves coming to know the Author of God's Book. Remember Paul's goal: "that I may know Him.."

The Greek word #191 for "hear" in Strong's, can mean both the actual hearing of the sound, as well as understanding the intent of the message. You can say "I heard you", meaning one thing, or you can say, "I got it" – meaning "I perceive what you are trying to get across". When Yahweh says He wants us to hear him, He means He wants us to "get it", to grasp and to understand what He wants us to understand.

Look at what Yahshua (Jesus) Himself says:

Mark 7:14 "When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, *and understand*"

Notice He equates proper hearing of his words with *understanding* His words. To really "hear" something, anything, is to "get it". To grasp its intent. We may be hearing words, as in a sermon, but are we "getting it"?

In Nehemiah's day, we can read in Neh 8:7-8 that the Levites "*helped the people to understand the Law; and the people *stood* in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to *understand* the reading."*

As a result, we read in Neh 8:12 that the people rejoiced greatly, "*because* they *understood* the words which were spoken".

Warning: we can get caught up in the oratory of a speaker and not be carefully weighing what is being said or not said. I think America got caught up with Obama's oratory. He is a very captivating speaker. But when we listen to a charismatic, dynamic speaker who has a deep, vibrant voice and a way with words, let's remember to be pondering what he's saying. .We can become so enamored with the oratory – that we forget to examine how deep the message is. We just love hearing the speaker so much that we sometimes can't repeat much about what was actually preached, even just an hour later.

Anyway, to hear God means to hear the message and then to understand it so we can act on it.

[TRACK 9] But sometimes we get a clear message, but don't understand *why* God is asking us to do something. Sometimes understanding why we're being told to do something only becomes clear as we obey! The children of Israel may not have understood why they were heading to an apparent trap called the Red Sea. It was apparent only as they

obeyed. We certainly know Ezekiel and Jeremiah had many seemingly weird assignments whose purpose only became clear as they obeyed.

Let me give you another example, this one a personal one. About 1978 or so, I was serving in Canada. My wife and I were just having some cereal for breakfast, and as I raised a spoonful of cereal to my mouth, I remember stopping in mid-air. I turned my head, looked at my wife, and said, "I've gotta call Dave". She asked me why. I told her I didn't know why, but the urge, the message, inside of me was so strong—I *had* to call Dave. So I put the spoon down, got on the phone and called Dave.

What followed makes my point that the clarity often comes *as* we obey the message. Dave was an alcoholic, a new convert just beginning The Way of salvation. He started sobbing and finally stammers, "I can't believe you're calling me. Why *did* you call me?". I said that I had just gotten a very strong urge to call him. He replies, "I've been praying my heart out for the past 15 minutes begging God to put it on your heart to call me. You see, I got drunk last night and attempted to rob a Safeway supermarket with a water gun – and I'm in so much trouble now. I just got out on bail."

So I didn't understand *why* I had to call Dave, but when I obeyed the message, the "why" became clear.

Another time, years later, one late Friday night, I was preparing a sermon but as I worked on it, strong thoughts would flood into my mind having to do with a totally different topic. The thoughts were good, better than anything I had figured out before, so I wrote them down and went back to working on the first topic at hand. But over and over, waves of thoughts would pour into my mind on the other topic – a topic I didn't particularly even want to cover the next day. This kept happening so much that I remember finally stopping, looking up to the ceiling and asking, "OK, my Master, are you telling me you'd rather I speak on *your* topic, instead of my topic?" (I chuckled as I said that).

So that's what I did. I spoke on the topic I had not really intended to speak on. After I gave the sermon, a woman came up to me with tears in her eyes. She started by saying, "I know there is a God in heaven. You see, last night I prayed and prayed that God would help me understand the very topic you covered today. It was as if God was answering my prayer as you gave the sermon. As you started speaking, chills went down my spine. It was almost as if God was saying to me, 'OK – you asked me to talk to you about this topic, so here it is. Listen up!'"

When I told her what had happened to me the night before, we discovered all that was happening during the very time she was fervently praying that God would inspire me to cover the topic we did cover that day. We were both comforted and encouraged by the fact there is indeed a living God in heaven.

So hear God, understand the message if you can, and then the vital next step – OBEY the message. Respond to what you're hearing. That's assuming of course it measures up with scripture. Test the spirit. God does not change. It's not God's voice if the message is telling you to sin, or to be hateful, or to do something that does not represent the working of God's spirit.

If we get a message from Elohim, the Almighty true God, and don't act on it – the voice "signal strength" may fade. Or, as in the case of Jonah, God *may* still speak to us, but this time through the storm or the waves of the Sea. God may even prepare a great fish to bring us back to where we should be – back on dry land! What's *your* storm, what's your great fish in your life? Maybe God is trying to get your attention to urge you to *do* what He has been telling you to do!

If we ask our children to do something, and they look at us and mutter something, but don't do what we told them to do, what do we say? We say in a firm voice, "Didn't you hear what I said?"

Of course they heard! But we know that to "hear" something means to act on it, or it sure doesn't look like the person heard. God is asking *us*, "Did you not hear what I said"? To the Almighty, it is just as if we in fact put ear plugs in our ears, as we stopped our ears from hearing, when we don't obey Him.

There are many passages where God summarizes why Israel had to go into captivity. In a nutshell, Yahweh says He would warn Israel, he sent His prophets to talk to them, "Nevertheless, they *would not* hear" (2 Kings 17:14; Neh 9:29). *Would not* hear. In Zechariah 7:11-13—God even says "they shrugged their shoulders, *and stopped their ears* so they *could not* hear."

That's pretty offensive to our Creator. God is saying that sometimes it appears to Him that we're actually clapping our hands over our ears, or putting ear plugs in our ears, refusing to hear Him. Anytime you hear God's clear message to do, or not do, something – and don't obey, you might as well be walking away from God. . . . Serious stuff, brethren.

How many times have we not heard the inner voice of God telling us clearly, "Don't say that, don't say *anything* right now, in fact" – or, "don't go in there, leave now, this is trouble"? And what happens if we don't heed and obey that voice? Many times the voice of God is urging us to call someone, or to *forgive* someone, perhaps your father or your minister or your neighbor or your wife – and how wonderful when we follow that voice. We better heed that voice and obey it!

Yahweh even says if we refuse to hear Him over and over, perhaps He'll dole out some of our own medicine - - and He may refuse to hear us when we plead with Him. Zech. 7:13.

Mark 4:23 tells us, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

If we "get" something, understand it, and don't act on it, we could lose the gift of spiritual hearing.

Luke 8:18

Therefore take heed **HOW you hear**. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Remember the man who built His house on the Rock was the one who was considered wise. He is described as a doer: "Whoever comes to Me and hears my sayings and does them..." Of course when we obey God, we are building our spiritual house on the rock that is Christ, a sure foundation. That's why I call this website "Light on the Rock". The man who does nothing is the foolish man who builds on a sand, leading to his ruin (Luke 6:47-49).

The Parable of the Sower also is full of meaning of receiving the word, letting it take seed in good earth, and letting it grow.

James 1:21-22

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be ***doers*** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

So "hearing God" includes a strong meaning of "getting it" and then obeying our loving God. Doing what He says to do. If we are not obeying God, we can't be said to be hearing God.

I've had to repent many times for having heard God's word for me, specifically, and too often in the past I did not act on it. That's not good, and must be deeply repented of. We won't continue to hear His voice if we don't act on what He's already given us. Frankly, I'm convinced many of God's children are not acting minute by minute on what God is telling us.

[TRACK 10] Let's wrap up now. So what have we learned so far?

- In these last days, being able to correctly "hear God" will become ever more crucial than ever before. Our very lives could depend on it.
- Beware of those who claim to have heard God and who have a message for you – if their message, or your message for that matter, doesn't square with Scripture. God warns us about false ministers claiming to speak for Him. Don't claim you have a message or will pass on a message from God unless you're sure.
- We covered "why" we want to hear God's voice. Yahweh very much wants His children to hear Him. We need to hear Him for guidance and direction. Hearing Yahweh identifies us as His children, as His sheep. We also showed how it is our

very lifeline to eternity. We will be judged by what we could have heard and acted on. Another reason for wanting to hear the Almighty is that Abba in heaven is delighted when He senses we enjoy hearing His voice, His words.

- We covered how “hearing God” is not open to all for now. God has to give us spiritual hearing through His Spirit. It’s not something we can do on our own. In fact God is the one who has made the world unable to grasp the spiritual, for they rejected it from him and so he gave them over to their carnal desires.
- Yahweh speaks to us today through His Son, Jesus the Christ, or Yahshua the Messiah. Next time we’ll cover the many ways He does that.
- We use the spiritual hearing or lose it. And we’re accountable for what we understand.
- “Hearing God” is equated with more than just hearing the words and the sound of the words. To “hear God” is to *understand* the message and then to obediently act on the message. Sometimes we don’t act. If we don’t obey, and act on it, it’s no different – even worse in fact – than not ever having heard at all. God is speaking to us all the time. The more we don’t act on what He tells us He wants us to do in every day situations, the fainter and fainter His voice becomes.

So Almighty God has not lost His voice or gone mute. He loves to talk to His children, and He *is* talking to us. But are we hearing him. We just have to learn to hear, and then to heed. Those are 2 different issues. And of course, we all know He talks to us by His inspired word, by scripture. We all know He talks to us by Bible study; by points in a sermon that God has inspired (notice my caveat there). But we’ll see next time that God talks to us in many, many more ways than just by His inspired word.

Here’s homework before you hear the next message. You’ll get more out of the next sermon if you ponder some things ahead of time:

- I’d like you to take some time listing things that could keep us from really hearing God’s voice. Think through the process of being able to hear and understand and do what even a human being is telling you. Do you have to speak the same language? Is it easier to understand if you are close to – or far from – the speaker? Take off from there. Find scriptures that have to do with hearing God as well.
- Then prepare some notes you can think of that explain the various ways God speaks to us. Where does He speak to us? When and under what situations can we expect to hear God? Think this one through – and then hear the next message. Ask God to speak to you as you prepare your own notes, for that matter.
- If you feel this message has been helpful, share this website with others.

We’ll end with that for now and continue next time on to this very, very important topic of hearing God’s voice. Until next time – your brother in Christ, Philip Shields.

