

## **Hearing God's Voice - A Study in the Prophetic**

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**Jer 33:3** Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and mighty things you do not know.

**1 Cor 14:1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy

**1 Cor 14:24-25** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all: the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you

**1 Cor 14:31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

**Job 33:14-17** Indeed god speaks once, or twice, yet no one notices it. In a dream, a vision or the night, when sound sleep falls on men, while they slumber in their beds, then he opens the ears of men and seals their instruction that He may turn man aside from his conduct and keep man from pride.

### **Why should we want to hear God's voice.**

Prophecy reveals the mind and heart of God to His people. It encourages, exhorts, and comforts. It helps build the church, to build a closeness between God and His people, and also between one another. It stimulates and encourages people to be better than they are before God. It comforts and shows the tenderness of God's heart in our distress. It keeps us moving forward under fire. It helps to produce real men and women of God who will pay the price to be in the forefront of all that Good is doing. (Cooke p 217) Revelation is God making known to us what we did not know or could not have known through our natural senses. Sometime answering a critical question we didn't even know to ask. God loves us and wants to fellowship and communicate with us. Through the language of prophecy, God speaks into being what is not already there. Specifically God's Voice:

1. provides edification, exhortation & comfort (1 Cor 14:3)
2. helps people know God loves them
3. restores our soul and renews our mind.
4. brings real light, faith and confidence
5. provides an agenda for prayers & intercession
6. opens up teaching and confirms preaching, causes us to study the Word
7. prepares us for service
8. gives correction (Rev 2 & 3, letters to the 7 churches)
9. confirms, provides a witness, strengthens us, gives priority & timing
10. gives direction, guidance, and enhanced vision
11. strengthens us to withstand

12. gives vital information in spiritual warfare
13. gives protection
14. warns of impending judgment or tragedy
15. gives a faith injection
16. gives knowledge of future events, difficulties
17. provides insight into future or end time events
18. gives freedom to do things for God we would not otherwise do
19. provides insights not made clear by Scripture
20. releases churches into new directions and purposes
21. provides insight into counseling and healing situations
22. gives evangelistic break throughs
23. provides revelation before tribulation, (Acts 15:6-24)
24. awakens us to the will and purpose of God for us in the present.
25. forthtelling - declaring the Word of God
26. foretelling - communicating the future
27. reveals sin, idols, strongholds
28. affirms - releases the approval of God into people's lives
29. helps people to make sense of previous happenings
30. redemptive - speaks to the destiny if an individual for God.

God is always speaking, we are just not hearing.

## **Ways God Speaks to Us**

1. **understanding when reading the Word** John 1:1 Jesus is called the "WORD of God. Sometimes a person is given "a chapter & verse".
2. **fleeces** Jud 6:36-40, use as a last resort, Satan can counterfeit, lowest form of Revelation
3. **cast lots** - Jonah 1:7, Paul on board ship, replacement of Judas
4. **the natural world**- fire, wind, earthquake, Joel 2:25-27, I Kgs 19:11-12
5. **impressions, mental or spiritual** Acts 14:9 Paul perceived that a man who was crippled from birth had faith for healing. Acts 27:10 Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage ... Neh 7:5
6. **impressions in our bodies** - some receive words of knowledge for healing through their bodies.
7. **impressions in our emotions** – God allows us to feel in our own soul what someone else is experiencing . Or we will feel what the Lord feels for the person.
8. **spiritual intuition** - language of "knowing" in our spirit, a "hunch".
9. **spiritual seeing** - II Kings 2 Elijah's mantel passing to Elisha seen by sons of the prophets

10. **spiritual hearing** – we have a word of knowledge as a result of something someone says. Sometimes we hear a chapter & verse of scripture.
11. **spiritual smell** – the smell of the Holy Spirit. The smell of death. Smell of incense.
12. **spiritual touch** – a "knowing" of a fact or insight when we lay hands on someone.
13. **spiritual taste** – some have specific tastes in their mouth when praying for others that gives insight as to how they should pray.
14. **physical manifestation in our bodies** - Luke 8:45 touched Jesus robe
15. **still small voice of God** – personal instruction or encouragement.
16. **internal audible voice of God** - we hear Him speak to us in our spirit.
17. **glimpses in the spirit** – fleeting internal pictures, still pictures
18. **internal visions** – series of pictures with a story line.
19. **songs/hymns in our spirit** - I Sam 10:5, I Cor 14:15, Eph 5;19
20. **words of knowledge** - a spiritual gift.
21. **discerning of spirits** - a spiritual gift
22. **open visions** – received with open eyes, not stopped by distractions
23. **dreams, literal** – quick vignettes, showing us the future under certain circumstances. Joseph's dream to take Jesus & Mary to Egypt
24. **dreams, symbolic** – Stories of Daniel and Joseph, require interpretation
25. **dreams of angels or the Lord** Gen 20:3, 31:24, I Kings 3:5-15, Matt 1:20, 2:12-13.
26. **trances** – Peter Acts 10:10-34 natural surroundings are obscured. You participate in the scene.
27. **being caught up in the Spirit** – Paul into the 3rd heaven II Cor 12:2-3 Eze 3:12-15
28. **angelic visitations** - Many examples in the book of Acts. Paul and Peter released from prisons.
29. **audible voice of God only we hear** - Eli & Samuel I Sam 3:1
30. **audible voice of God all hear** – if you only think you have heard it, you haven't. It comes with fear. Moses Ex 3:6.
31. **visitations/appearances of the Lord** Paul, Acts 9:37, Gen 18, Ex 3:2, 16;10, 33:18-20, 34:8.

## Prophetic Components

### 1. Revelation

God speaks to us in one or more of the above ways. He varies the clarity, intensity, timing and means of revelation. Revelation is the essence of the information that is communicated. It is the raw data of divine communication. Revelation is always a struggle between the mind and the spirit. Our minds

receive information, our spirits receive revelation. The mind can receive pieces of the message, the spirit has the experience. Revelation is always part man and part God. The higher the level of gifting, the closer to 100% God, the messages become. Prophecy is a mix of the Holy Spirit drawing upon our knowledge and experiences with God and our understanding of scriptures, times of prayer, communion, and preparation.

All prophecy is provisional and depends on obedience. There is no unconditional personal prophecy. Prophecy can be repealed if the conditions are not met. Unconditional prophecy is usually spoken over nations. (Dan 2:26-45) Prophecy declares the possibility, not the inevitability of things. Much depends on us. All prophecy requires a response, verbally, in lifestyle or relationships. Lack of a response can cancel a prophecy. (Num 14)

### Levels of Gifting

- 1) **inspiritual prophecy** - Ministry of the prophetic to individuals. Usually brought in times of worship or prayer for another. Gifting to all believers. (I Cor 14:3) Primarily a "blessing" ministry. Edification, exhortation, inspirational, encourage, comfort, bless, non-directive, non-predictive. Can be a personal or corporate word.
  
- 2) **prophetic intercessors** - has gifts of prophecy & intercession. Receives a Word from God with the urge to pray about it in a divinely anointed utterance. (Gen 18:20-23, Ex 32:7-14, Dan 9:1-4, 20-22, Luke 2:36-38, 22:31, John 1: Acts 9:10-17, 22:17-21.)
  - Hears prophetically from the Holy Spirit about needs for which to pray.
  - Has a gift of Intercession, a distinct calling or ministry
  - Is able to pray for long periods of time. (can spend between 2 and 5 hours daily in prayer).
  - Carries the burden, and prays until the burden lifts. .
  - Brings warning at sight of enemies or evil messengers.
  - Has an unusually close relationship with God.
  - Prays God's heart and under His direction reports words, thoughts, images and actions He releases to be shared.
  - God speaks to them through dreams, visions, songs, proclamations, symbolism or prophetic acts.

- 3) **prophetic gifting** - have a gift of prophecy - believers who regularly receive impressions, dreams, visions, or other types of revelation. Usually confined to personal prophecy.
- 4) **revelational gifting** - ministry of prophecy - brings direction and/or correction. Evangelistic and special blessings. Helps guide our decisions in the future. Usually given by those who have a gifting that has been recognized, nurtured and commissioned for regular ministry in the church. Minister personal prophecy, and corporate prophecy for local churches. Releases vision and corporate callings. Refocuses on God in times of trouble, joins past and future.
- 5) **fore-telling gifting** - office of "prophet". Ministry is somewhat like the prophets of the Old Testament. Often minister in signs, wonders and healing, and are known to speak 100 percent accurate words from God. They predict future events with accuracy. Sometimes strange and weird. Can minister in prophecy for long periods of time to individuals or groups. Prophecy to churches giving them a vision of the future, a picture of what should be their purpose. Prophecies to cities, regions, governments, and nations. Seeks to prepare the bride of Christ. Give end time prophecies. Usually the gift is manifest at a very early age. They don't ask for the gift. Many times misunderstood. Takes 15-20 years to mature into this level of gifting.

## **2. Interpretation** Ways we understand what God is saying

- 1) interpretation says - "what does this mean"
- 2) most revelations level 2) and above will require interpretation
- 3) revelation may be correct, but it is misinterpreted.
- 4) Interpretation may come by the messenger, the receiver, or a third party, i. Daniel and Joseph.
- 5) many revelations come in symbols
  - scriptural – white as snow – cleansed, red = sin.
  - contemporary - cars, busses, airplanes, beds
  - personal – golf clubs, music
- 6) requires experience and wisdom
- 7) some have a gift of interpretation, but not of revelation

## **3. Application** Ways we respond to what God tells us

- 1) Application says "when & how will this come to pass". What should I do with it.
- 2) Is it for my information only, or to be shared.
- 3) Should it be shared in public or private.

- 4) Who is supposed to hear it, person, leadership, congregation, no one.
- 5) When should it be shared (sometimes this is part of the package) If God gives you a "word" he will also give you the timing, else put it on the shelf.
- 6) What preparation is needed before the "word" is given?
- 7) Is this all of the message? Sometimes the Lord gives it in stages.
- 8) The magnitude of the anointing and the time to give it are independent.
- 9) If it is a corporate word, the leaders will determine or confirm the timing.
- 10) Corrective words should always be given in private.

#### **4. Presentation** - How will I present the "word".

- 1) Every revelation is a call to pray for that person or group.
- 2) Emphasize the main and plain, not the rare & bizarre
- 3) Don't do anything strange with out a clear leading from God.
- 4) Don't do anything prophetically that is potentially embarrassing or harmful to another person.
- 5) Be gentle and kind.
- 6) Don't make a general word into a specific word because it is better received.
- 7) Don't add or embellish
- 8) Don't give "parking lot" prophecies
- 9) Submit the prophetic words to mature Christians who understand the prophetic for wisdom and counsel.
- 10) Working out a valid prophetic word
  - write it down if it is received in advance.
  - pray over it
  - submit it to someone with a prophetic anointing
  - commit to faith regardless of the circumstances
  - prepare your character and attitude
  - wait on God's timing
  - watch for the fruits
- 11) Pray and fast a week or two before sharing it with leadership
- 12) Be prepared to record it if it is spontaneous
- 13) Don't look for clues, they can mislead. Don't look at faces for confirmation.  
Facial expressions and tears do not always reflect the accuracy of your words.
- 14) If evaluation is required by the leadership, the Lord will give you the word in sufficient time for this to happen. God knows the protocol.
- 15) Let the reference to it being God's word be at the same level as the magnitude of the revelation. i. e. Use "Thus saith the Spirit", only when you have received the highest level of revelation. If you receive an impression, you should say "I think God wants you to know. . . .". Usually not the best to speak in the first person.

- 16) Present in the same flow of what God is doing, gentle & comforting or strong and bold.
- 17) Reveal the level of certainty of the message along with the message.
- 18) Give only what you get. When God stops talking, make sure you do.
- 19) The spirit of prophecy and the spirit of love are very close. Make sure you know the difference, and what is motivating you to speak.
- 20) If you are unsure, ask questions before you prophesy. i. e. do you have a daughter, is she sick?
- 21) Don't counsel your word after giving it. God knows, they know, you don't have to know. Unsolicited advice could change the perception of what God is say and can be manipulative.
- 22) Smile when you share the message. You should radiate love, not judgment.
- 23) Remember most prophecy is conditional, the receiver may have to do something.
- 24) Limit the preface of your words. There is no need to build yourself up before giving a word. After all it belongs to God doesn't it?
- 25) Try to avoid trailers and disclaimers. Just give the word and stop.  
Be sure you have permission to speak into someone's life. Not everyone wants to receive a Word.
- 26) Make sure you know if it is a Word, through you, or to you?
- 27) Don't add filler "hamburger helper" by trying to be more loving.

## **Road Blocks and Problem Areas**

1. Fear
  - that the revelation may not be from God
  - of rejection
  - causes procrastination
  - that God expects perfection
  - of looking foolish
  - our speech is insufficient (Moses)
  - brings insecurity
  - because of inexperience
2. Pride - self aggrandizement-aspirations, want recognition, status
3. Lack of spiritual protocol or asking opinions of others first.
4. Impatience, wanting to give the Word immediately.
5. Misinterpreting feelings of love for a Word from God.
6. Unclean hearts, unforgiveness, sin, strongholds
11. Expecting confirmation before the faith
12. Refusal to give any "words" at all
13. Cheat (water down, don't give it all, or make it general)
14. God speaks and we think it is from our own nature.

15. Lack of obedience
16. Our instant response "who am I"
17. 1st fear is public speaking, 2nd is of death, rather die than speak.
18. Procrastination, "I am not ready today" & tomorrow never comes
19. Risk embarrassment, judgment & criticism
20. Panic
21. Sometimes difficult for beginners to tell the difference between inspiritual prophecy and love or soulish sentimentality.

### **Testing Prophecy - How do we know it is from God?**

1. Sources of "Words" (voices) Gen 3:9, Heb 1:1-12, I Cor 14:10-12, Ps 29:39, Rev 3:20)
  - spirit of God, spirit of truth, Holy Spirit, angels.
  - the flesh, spirit of man, spirit of error
  - demonic spirit
2. The devil accuses us of sin (Rev 12:10), counterfeit signs and wonders (Matt 24:26, 2 Cor 11:13-15), imparts a lying spirit (I King 22:21), predicts the future (Acts 16:16), provides a counterfeit anointing (I John 2:27) provides false teaching (Acts 20:20-31). In the last days even the elect shall be deceived. (Matt 24:24). In the last days, false prophets will appear (Matt 24:11)
3. Sources of contamination
  - Pressure of the people to prophesy or to please people.
  - Lack of character or fruits of the spirit in the giver.
  - Personal sin
4. Does it agree with scripture (2 Tim 3:16).
5. Does it display the character of Christ, glorify and exalt him? (John 16:14)
6. Is it given in love
7. Is it frightening, harsh, condemning or critical.
8. Does the Holy Spirit bear witness that it is true (I John 2:27)
9. Has the source been tested according to I John 4:1-3, Acts 15:16-18
10. Does it edify, exhort or console? (I Cor 14:3)
11. Does it have/produce good fruit (Matt 7:15-16)
12. If it predicts the future, does it come to pass (Deut 18:22)
13. Does the word turn people toward God or away from Him (Deut 13:1-5)
14. Does it produce liberty or bondage (Rom 8:15, I Cor 14:33, 2 Tim 1:7)

### **Spiritual Protocol & Accountability**

1. "Let the prophets speak two or three and let the other judge" (I Cor 14:29)
2. For personal prophecy, submit your Word in writing to those with more experience and wisdom. Ask them to pray for confirmation.



3. For corporate prophecy, submit your Word in writing if possible to the pastor, or the presider as early as you can.
4. Follow the decision of the pastor or presider whether the Word will be presented and/or when.
5. Be prepared for your Word to be rejected. You are then not responsible.
6. Make preparation for it to be recorded. If it is spontaneous, write as much of it down before or after the presentation as you can and give it to the presider or pastor for later use and follow up.
7. Presiders should be familiar with their responsibility for spontaneous corporate
8. Keep a record of all your prophecies. Others may misquote, or misinterpret.
9. The Spirit does not interrupt the Spirit. The Lord will provide a time if it is right.

### **Is This My Gift**

1. Is it a desire of your heart? (Ps 37:4)
2. Ask others what they think about your gift mix.
3. Ask a prophetic person to pray for you.
4. Try it out if you regularly have prophetic experiences
  - in a small group
  - does it encourage
  - are the fruits good
5. In a meeting, ask God to guide you in ministering to others.
6. There is a price to pay for being prophetic. Pain, passion are inseparable linked. Where there is no pain, there will be minimal passion for God and minimal compassion for others.
7. Several gifts may be involved in the prophetic
  - Word of Knowledge                      -Gift of Revelation
  - Gift of Prophecy                        -Word of Wisdom
  - Gift of Discerning of Spirits
8. Most highly prophetic people usually don't have wisdom in application.
9. When people hear of someone being prophetic, they may think of a man with wild hair, and fiery eyes, crying out against sin and calling fire down from heaven, or pronouncing judgment and doom or predicting the end of the world. They see us looking through old testament spectacles.
10. Be prepared for a lot of disappointment in knowing God's will for people, and not seeing them follow it.

### **How Do We Learn**

1. Trial and error - before toddling comes falling "For a righteous man falls 7 times and rises again. (Prov 24:16)
2. know the scriptures
3. Letting others judge (I Cor 14:21)

4. During prayer times we are praying for people.
5. No one exercises a spiritual gift well the first few times. "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly" at first
6. read 10 books on the subject (see list at end of this study)
7. be mentored, accept an apprenticeship
8. realize you will have mixed feelings, awe, fear, trepidation, uncertainty, insecurity and inadequacy, as well as pride and arrogance.
9. visit with the leadership, make your life accountable to the them
10. expect to make mistakes
11. move out in faith

### **Personal Preparation**

1. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord
2. Receive an inner healing.
3. Be of good character
4. Bathe yourself in the WORD
5. Be humble, humility is always acquired in the desert.
6. Believe in our hearts that our best qualities are not good enough to cause us to deserve God's attention.
7. All the ways you prepare to use any gift: prayer, meditation, praying in tongues, all the disciplines.
8. Wait on God, listen as much as you pray, keep a notebook, be still in our spirit.
9. Desire to prophecy. Tell the Lord.
10. Have a burden for people. Want to see them blessed, healed, restored.
11. Expect God to use you.
12. Ask God to stir up our gift for the benefit of others.
13. Not enough to proclaim the message, we must live the message.
14. Beware of Pride. One who receives revelation wants others to know he got it. They want the credit and recognition. A spirit of self righteousness.

### **Receiving Personal Prophecy**

1. Ask for it to be recorded or written as soon after the experience as possible. We hear only in part.
2. Visit with the "prophet" for additional information and to answer questions.
3. Ask the Lord for confirmation.
4. When you receive a prophetic word from someone, you should always hold it at arms length until you receive confirmation from God himself in your heart.
5. If you are in doubt about what you received, take it to others you trust for a witness.
6. Once you receive it, you need, in prayer, to "accept" it, and give God thanks for it. All prophecy needs a response, even if only thanksgiving and praise.

7. Develop a plan for it's fulfillment.
8. Be committed to the plan. Have you obeyed the last thing God told you to do?
9. Prophecy, to be fulfilled, needs our faith, cooperation and obedience
10. Disobedience prevents us from hearing God's words
11. Most prophecy is not self fulfilling, but conditional. We must do something. Identify the conditions. Commit to do them.
12. The "word" in Matt 13: 19-23 fell on 4 kinds of hearts. Which will yours be?
13. Be prepared for the enemy to contest what you received. (Moses Ex 4, 5, 6 Num 14, Gen 37, 39. ) It may get worse before it gets better.
14. Get advice from others about the application.
15. Fulfillment of prophecy may be limited by our character (2 Cor 7:1)
16. May cause a shaking from our safe position to unsettled disturbance.
17. After the calling comes the training.
18. God's time table is almost always longer than ours.
- 19 He will test us. After joy, excitement will come testing, a set of circumstances that are designed to enable us to hold on to the words we have received.

### **Resources in the order of value.**

- Thompson, Steve You May All Prophecy, MorningStar, ISBN 1-878327-96-8, 2003
- Deere, Jack, The Beginner's Guide to The Gift of Prophecy, , Regal Books, ISBN 0-8307-3389-2, 2001
- Cooke, Graham, Developing Your Prophetic Gifting, Chosen Books, ISBN 0-8007-9326-9, 1994 & 2003
- Jacobs, Cindy, The Voice of God, Regal Books, ISBN 0-8307-1773-0, 1995
- Hamon, Bill, Prophets & Personal Prophecy, Destiny Image ISBN 0 7684-2054-7, 2001

### **Not as helpful (in order of value)**

- Deere, Jack, Surprised by the Voice of God, Zondervan, ISBN 0-310-22558-2, 1996
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- Bickle, Mike, Growing in the Prophetic, Creation House, ISBN 8-88419-426-4, 1996
- Wentroble, Barbara, Prophetic Intercession, Regal, 1999 ISBN 0-8307-2376-5, 0-8037-3279-9

- Joyner, Rick, The Prophetic Ministry , MorningStar, ISBN 1-867327-90-9, 1997
- Davis, Paul Keith, Engaging the Revelatory Realm of Heaven, Streams Pub., ISBN 1-58483-085-9, 2003
- Goll, Jim, The Beginner's Guide to Hearing God, Regal Books, ISBN 0-8307-3405-3, 2004
- Cain, Paul & Kendall, R. T., The Word and the Spirit, Creation House, ISBN 0-88419-544-9, 1998

## **Prayer**

Dear Lord, I give all of myself to You. Take every aspect of my life and use me for Your kingdom to glorify Your name. I'll do anything You want me to do, go anywhere You want me to go, and say anything You want me to say. Father, there isn't any gift that You have for me that I don't want. If you want to use me in a way I'm not used to, I yield myself to that. I trust You, Lord, to teach and guide me as I dedicate my life to You.

I want to hear Your voice and learn Your ways. Be my Teacher and Guide. Enroll me in the School of the Spirit and teach me to hear Your voice. Write down my name! I want to know You, be a disciple of Christ Jesus, and have sweet communion with You. I want to hear You, I want to have more faith, and I want to obey what You tell me. Help Lord, Your servant wants to listen! In Jesus's name, Amen