

## **Does God Still Speak Directly to His People Today?**

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**Integration Question:** *We hear the voice of God in the Bible for sure. Do we also hear Him through prophecy, prayer or inner voice? How does this impact the church's decision-making? How we counsel people?*

### Theological Statement

Holy Spirit is still very active today, just as He has been throughout all of history, speaking to His people through prophecy, prayer, and the intimate “inner voice.” As recipients and partakers of the New Covenant, followers of Jesus are given what was prophesied about and accomplished through His life, death, and resurrection. That is, all New Covenant people are to be so radically transformed that they would know how to walk and live in the way of the Lord because God’s law would be written on their newly circumcised hearts through the outpouring and active relationship with His Spirit (Jer. 31:33-34; Joel 2:28-29; Ezek. 36:26-37). During Jesus’ life, He prepares His followers for exactly this, telling them shortly before His death that His Spirit would soon be given, indicating the inauguration of the New Covenant, and that He “will guide [them] into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to [them] what is to come” (John 16:12–13). Then, right after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the book of Acts records how the New Covenant people finally received the promised outpouring of God’s Spirit, as well as how they lived, led by God’s Spirit as He spoke personally and directly to them.

What is preserved in Scriptures from the first time Holy Spirit was poured out to God’s people on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and similarly after being poured out to all New Covenant followers of Jesus (Acts 10), is how the New Covenant people of Jesus heard directly, specifically, and prophetically from Holy Spirit. Sometimes, He spoke to specific people for specific situations through His voice, audibly and in their “inner voice” (Acts 13:2-3); sometimes

through a storm (Acts 16:6); and other times through confirmation and prophesy of others (Acts 15:27-28). Additionally, New Testament letters reveal how the earliest communities were to utilize their relationship with Holy Spirit and spiritual giftings to hear God's voice and specific direction, being told that "when [they] assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor. 14:26). New Covenant followers of Jesus today should expect no different. As long you are a New Covenant member living into the fullness of an abiding life with King Jesus, then it is expected and necessary to experience Jesus' voice and revelation, through His Spirit, that must be tested and in alignment with Scripture (1 John 4:1-6; 1 Thes. 5:18-20).

### Ministry Application

The phenomena that the Creator of the universe talks directly and specifically to His people is nothing short of astounding and carries with it implications of magnitude. The first implication is that people can connect to Jesus in the most intimate, relational way possible. In John's first letter, he tells his audience that the abiding life of Jesus in them is made possible through Holy Spirit in order for them to experience the promise of eternal life, which he defines in his gospel as intimately knowing, experiencing, and living in relationship with God and Jesus (1 John 2:25-27; John 17:3). The reality of hearing God's voice, whether through prophesy, prayer, or that innate inclination of the heart, is that each and every person can live, intimately, in an abiding relationship with the Father. They do not need to go to a priest or a "more holy person" to seek guidance, identity or wisdom. Instead, they can commune with the King themselves, from their closet, bedroom, car, walking path, or local coffee shop. Christians can expect to walk as Jesus walked and bear His image more clearly to the world (1 John 4:16, 2 Cor. 3:18) because they experience the intimate, personal voice of God.

A second implication of God still speaking to His people today is that individual followers of Jesus and church bodies alike can make decisions in every aspect of life, anticipating to hear what God wants them to do and how God wants them to do it. Whether it is a church seeking to expand their footprint, a person wondering if they should accept a new job offer, or a family deliberating if they should adopt a baby or try to conceive themselves, there is an answer, and He wants to reveal it as we seek Him. Expecting Holy Spirit to speak directly to people amidst their praying, interceding, and petitioning draws people into a place of humility, vulnerability, and dependence on Jesus, as well as into deeper community with other Christians, as He speaks to and through His body. Throughout the New Testament, God spoke through the prophesy of other people, which means, followers of Jesus should dedicate time as a community, whether in a church elder meeting or friends meeting in their living room, to seeking God's voice together. A direct result should be that individual pastoral counseling sessions, or church elder meetings, should never be boring and dull, but rather, full of hope and edification as they hear God speak intimately and directly to His people.