# How God Speaks

God has always communicated to humanity through a multitude of ways. Beginning in Genesis chapter three, we see God wanted fellowship with His creation. He walked with Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen 3:8-10). Then we see God instruct Israel on constructing and maintaining the Tabernacle as a physical representation of God being with His people (Exodus 25-31). Later, God’s temple was built through Solomon (1 Chronicles 28). In the New Testament, Jesus walked with the Disciples in the Gospels as the Immanuel (God with us). Later, at Pentecost, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit as a seal of the promise to be with them always (Ephesians 1:13).

It is commonly understood that God is triune, three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is also generally understood within the church that we are to be led by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16). What isn’t commonly understood is how that works. Often, we’re told to “pray and read our Bible more.” While good advice, there must be more. The Pharisees prayed and read a lot, yet completely missed God’s heart.

The Bible is God’s primary means of communication and is our most concrete set of instructions. In the Bible, we learn who God is and who we are meant to be. The written law was our “tutor to lead us to Christ” (Galatians 3:24). The Word is relevant, but we need the Holy Spirit’s guidance to understand the written Word.

God has always communicated by a variety of means. If the Bible is all we need, then Jesus wouldn’t have said we needed His Spirit to “guide us into all truth” (John 16:13). Furthermore, we’re told that the Holy Spirit “will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak.”(John 16:13) The natural question is, how does the Holy Spirit speak? The short answer is, through a variety of ways! But first, let us look at some of the ways God has spoken to His people in the Bible.

* Through Creation
* Angels
* Prophets
* Animals
* Jesus
* Dreams and Visions
* The written Word
* His Holy Spirit
* And more!

You don’t have to understand how God does what He does in order for Him to work. Nor do you have to know how He speaks in order for Him to speak. In fact, you wouldn’t be a Christian if God didn’t communicate with you somehow and draw your heart to Him (John 6:44)! The more important concept to grasp here is that He is speaking. “Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts…” (Hebrews 3:15). It makes sense that a loving God, who calls Himself Father, would want to speak to His children, especially when they come to Him in prayer!

**Hearing**

John 10:27

*“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;”*

John 10:2-4

*“But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.”*

Job 33:14

*“Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it.”*

John 8:47

*“He who is of God hears the words of God;”*

Rev 3:20

*“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”*

Heb 3:15, 4:7

*“…TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS…”*

Psalm 5:3

*“In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order* myprayer *to You and* eagerly *watch“*

Jeremiah 33:3

*“Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”*

Throughout scripture, God uses words to indicate He “speaks” and “listens.” As New Testament Believers, we can better recognize how He speaks by cultivating an active prayer life. And not just speaking at Him but expectantly giving Him space to reply.

Consider a phone conversation. If you talk and then hang up the phone, there is no space for the other person to reply. Instead, ask the Lord a question and allow Him to bring to mind whatever He wants. What comes to mind? Is there a memory, a feeling, or a thought? Do you see an image in your mind’s eye? Write these things down and then compare them to scripture. Does what you’re sensing/hearing/seeing align with scripture? Does it make sense, given your question? Cultivate an active prayer life, and you may be surprised by how God answers your prayers, even in the moment!

# Scriptural Support: How God Has Spoken

Below is a small sample of scriptures listing the ways that God has spoken. I encourage you to search the scriptures for yourself, identifying how God has communicated with his people.

## Through Creation

*“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”* Romans 1: 20

*“For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

*The heavens are telling of the glory of God;*

*And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

*Day to day pours forth speech,*

*And night to night reveals knowledge.”* Psalm 19:1-2

## Angels

Revelation 1:1

*“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,”*

Zechariah 1:12-14

*“12 Then the angel of the LORD said, “O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years? 13 The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. 14 So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.”*

Luke 1:11-13

*“11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.”*

Luke 1:26-28

“26 *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”*

Galatians 1:8

*“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!“*

## Prophets

Hebrews 1:1-2

*“1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”*

1 Samuel 9:9

*“(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, “Come, and let us go to the seer”; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)”*

Amos 3:7

*“Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.”*

## Animals

Numbers 22:29-30

*“29 Then Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now. 30 The donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?” And he said, “No.”*

## Jesus

Hebrews 1:1-2

*“1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”*

John 5:19

*“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”*

## His Holy Spirit

John 14:26

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*

John 16:13

*“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you 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 you what is to come.”*

Romans 8:14

*“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”*

Acts 1: 8

*“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Ezekiel 36:26-27

*“26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”*

Romans 8:26-27

*“26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”*

Galatians 5:25

*“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”*

## Written Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*“16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*

James 1:22

*“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”*

Psalm 119:105

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”*

## Dreams / Visions

Daniel 1:17

*“As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.”*

Daniel 8:15-16

*“15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, “Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.””*

Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17)

*“It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;  
And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.”*

Matthew 1:20

*“But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”*

Job 33:14-18

*“14 Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, [yet] no one notices it. 15 "In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, 16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, 17 That He may turn man aside [from his] conduct, And keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol.”*

1 Samuel 28:15

*“Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” And Saul answered, “I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do.*

Gen 20:3

*“But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.””*

Jeremiah 23:32

*“Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,” declares the LORD, “and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit,” declares the LORD.”*