

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... God Speaking Directly to Mankind Today

Before the cross God would speak to "the prophets in many portions and in many ways" and He often spoke to them through angels (Heb. 1:1, 2:2). How did the people know when a prophet was speaking from God? "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:22). The Hebrew writer also wrote, "the word spoken through angels [refers to the Mosaic Law: Psm. 68:17; Acts 7:53] proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty."

In these last days [after the cross of Christ] God has "spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world" (Heb. 1:2). If we do not listen, and are disobedient to His Son's spoken word, the Hebrew writer says, "how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). Paul wrote, "brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us [apostles] instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God...For you know what commandments we [apostles] gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:1-2).

There are those who believe that God still speaks directly to us as He did in the first century when the New Testament was being written. These people feel that the scriptures do not cover all modern-day situations. You will hear these people claim that God spoke to them, telling them what to do in a certain situation.

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate for every good work." If we have in Scripture the instruction for ALL good works, what else can we possibly need? Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:3-5 that he received his message by revelation from God, and that it can be understood by its readers. If we have ALL truth in the writings of the apostles, if the Scripture makes us adequate for "all good works" and makes the man of God "complete," and it is written so he can understand it, there is no need for God to reveal to mankind over and over again, that which He provided completely. In fact, Jude 3 tells us the "faith was once for all handed down to the saints." Peter was able to say that God "has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3).

But some say that God will speak directly to them outside of the written word of God. Such a view ignores the scriptural process which develops maturity as the Christian grows from "the elementary principles of the oracles of God" to the more "solid food" which is for the mature Christian, "who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb. 4:12-14). God speaks to us solely through the word of God today!

Others point out that the Scriptures themselves teach that the Spirit must lead and guide the Christian. While they do so, it is important to understand HOW the Spirit does this. In Ephesians 6:17, Paul tells us that the word of God is "the sword of the Spirit." Peter told Christians that "you have been born again not of the seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).

Let us put aside the false notion that we have been led by the Spirit outside of the word of God. Jesus said, "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). We are commanded to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). We accomplish this when we walk in truth (2 John 4). Jesus said, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to: info@sanjuanchurchofchrist.org