

Biblical Keys to Hearing the Voice of God Clearly

“I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks was one like a Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and with a golden sash wrapped around the chest. The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters” (Rev. 1:12-15).

God not only wants us to know the historical Jesus, who came in human form and walked among men. He yearns for us also to know the living, resurrected Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father wants to enable us to hear, know and obey the risen Lord.

But often we don't realize He is speaking to us. And no wonder we miss His cues—His voice is like the sound of many rushing waters. Revelation 1:15 says, “His voice [was like] the sound of many waters.” Notice the use of the word “many.” When it comes to many waters, there is the sound of a gentle, trickling stream; the sound of a thunderstorm, with rain pouring down; the sound of waves crashing in upon the shore and the overwhelming sound of a river at flood stage, clearing away everything in its path. God's voice today is like the sound of these many rushing waters.

A Revealing Phone Call

Once, the voice of God came to me in the middle of the night, but I didn't recognize it at first. The ringing of my telephone woke me up. I got up out of bed, went to our kitchen and picked up the phone, only to find there was no one on the other end—just a dial tone. I stumbled back into bed and fell asleep, only to hear the phone ringing a second time. I rolled

out of bed, groped in the dark and picked up the phone, only to find again that there was no voice on the other end.

Wearily, I walked back once more to my bedroom and crawled back into bed, only to be awakened a third time by hearing our telephone ringing. Determined to figure this thing out, I went to the kitchen, picked up the receiver and listened longer. I still didn't hear anything. But this time, a still, small voice in my heart whispered, *Jeremiah 33:3*.

I hung up the receiver, found a Bible and looked up the verse: "Call to Me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know." I was stunned by God's invitation, and I spent the next couple of hours just sitting in the quietness of our living room in the presence of the Almighty, communing with Him and listening to His sweet, sweet voice.

The Impact of His Voice

Let's read Psalm 29:3-9 to get a better idea of the variety of ways we might be able to hear the voice of God:

The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord sounds with strength; the voice of the Lord—with majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes like flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer to give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

Yes, when the powerful and glorious voice of the Lord comes into our lives, it rolls around in our spirits and "thunders" for a while (v. 3). It grabs our attention. We can't get away from it, and we can't get away from Him. At times, God will

manifest Himself as a glorious intruder, as He did with Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. If and when this occurs, we will never be the same. His voice will rock our world.

Majestic and penetrating, the voice of the Lord “breaks the cedars” (v. 5). Cedars are a very dense, hard wood. (Have you ever felt someone was “too dense” for the Lord to reach?) When cedars are broken open, they release an irresistible fragrance. God’s voice is capable of coming into and mowing down any situation that looms in front of us like an intimidating giant. Out of that once-foreboding giant, the aroma of Christ can come forth.

Psalm 29 continues, “The voice of the Lord flashes like flames of fire” (v. 7). Have you ever been scorched by the hot words of God? Sometimes thundering, sometimes quiet and sweet, God’s voice can bring intense conviction into our lives. When His authentic fire comes, we may feel like running away from the fire rather than into it. But this fiery word and resulting experience has come to purify us for a useful purpose. Let the fire fall, and let His word purify, cleanse and burn out all of the dross and impurities within your heart.

It is never too late for fresh life to emerge. Dormant dreams become activated in a moment by the voice of God. May His word come upon you and cause you to see yourself as a fruitful vine.

“And [the voice of the Lord] strips the forests bare” (v. 9a). How do you like that one? God’s voice comes, and it removes all the false armor we rely on. All of our vanities, self-reliance, false images and pretenses are stripped away, and we are left naked before the Creator of the universe. The voice of God brings humility into our lives. According to John 15, it is the tree that has borne fruit that He prunes. So let’s be encouraged, looking at the end result and remembering how good He is. If He strips us or asks us to lay something down, He always has a great reason.

God's Voice Today

God wants us to hear His voice not just yesterday but also today and in a vibrant relationship, with all of its manifestations, so we can bear much fruit—fruit that will remain.

So let His voice thunder. Let the fire fall. Let His word be magnified. Let the waterfall of His refreshing sound replenish each and every thing. Let all creation echo His sound. Let His still, small voice and His tumultuous voice continue to proceed from the throne of God into our lives.

The voice of the Lord is indeed diverse and majestic. Yes, everything in His temple shouts “Glory!” Come on, now. Do it with me. Give Him some praise, and watch what the Lord will do.