

## Does God Speak Today? Yes!

### Introduction

- A. Obviously God spoke in Bible times. Jehovah used prophets like Moses and Isaiah and apostles like Paul and Peter through which the Holy Spirit spoke to the people of God. But does God speak today somehow? At the beginning of our study, I'll tell you that the answer to this question is **yes**. God speaks today. But maybe not in the way you thought.
- B. If man is going to come to know God, God has to reveal himself. In *1 Corinthians 2:11 & 16*, Paul says that no one can know thoughts of another man unless he reveals himself. You cannot know what I believe or think unless I tell you or write it down. In the same way, Paul says that no one can know the thoughts of God. However, through revelation, we have the mind of Christ. Through this revelation we can know how to please God and how to be saved.
- C. God has not rejected his people and still wants to be known today by all. So of course God speaks today, but the real question is how does God speak today? People have a lot of differing ideas and answers for this. Some say today God speaks through dreams or even through a person's feelings. Others will even tell you they themselves are inspired by the Holy Spirit. But what does the Bible say?

### Body

- I. How did God speak in the past?
  - A. Often, we take the Bible for granted. Today, the Bible is easy to find and read. Almost everyone has one. Even people who don't believe in the inspiration of the Bible usually have a copy. If we don't have a Bible, it's easy to find one inexpensively or even free.
  - B. It wasn't so easy for people in Biblical times. In general, books were very expensive. The first printing press was not invented until AD 1455 by Gutenberg, so before that, all books were written by hand, word by word. Imagine how much time it would take to write the whole Bible by hand!
  - C. Besides the cost, for several years after the beginning of God's church, the New Testament did not even exist. While Paul was writing his letters to the Corinthians or the Philippians etc., the books we call the New Testament were being written and collected, and this process was not completed until more or less 70 years after Christ's death.. During this time, a person wanting to know what Jesus said about a particular subject couldn't just read Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. When a Christian wanted to know

how he should worship God, he couldn't search all the scriptures we have now.

- D. How did Christians in the first century come to know God if God has to reveal himself (*1 Corinthians 2:11, 16*)? The Bible speaks of miraculous spiritual gifts given to man as God's chosen method to reveal himself. For example, in *1 Corinthians 12:8-10*, we have a list of some of these gifts. The majority speak about special or supernatural revelation: words of wisdom, of knowledge, of faith, and of prophecy, the discernment of spirits, and tongues (languages). Though the words of the apostles and through these spiritual gifts, the early Christians were able to know God and his will for them.
- E. From what we read in the Bible, God gave miraculous power to man for **two purposes**: to reveal and to confirm.
  1. To reveal – God used many of the miraculous spiritual gifts to reveal his will to man. They were needed when the books of the Bible had not been written. Jesus commented to his apostles that the Spirit would come to give them his words (*Matthew 10:16-20*). Later, Paul said that the things he spoke and wrote were inspired by the same Spirit (*1 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 3:3-5*).
  2. To confirm – God also used spiritual gifts to confirm the spoken word. When a man came and said he spoke by the inspiration of God, how would one know if this were true? If the man truly were from God, he would perform a miracle in order to confirm origin of his words. We read in the account of Mark that Jesus promised spiritual gifts and that the miracles confirmed the words of the apostles (*Mark 16:14-18, 20*). Even in the written New Testament, the recorded miracles served to confirm the written word (*John 20:30-31*). If a strange told you he talks to God, would you easily him? Would you believe him more easily if he could raise people from the dead?
- II. How does God speak today?
  - A. Miracles and special revelation were useful and necessary to fill the space when the Bible was not available. When the Bible was finished, the necessity of these spiritual gifts came to an end. The Bible itself speaks of a time when special revelation and miracles would end (*1 Corinthians 13:8*). When was this time? The context gives us the answer.
  - B. In *13:9-10*, Paul describes spiritual gifts as only part of something greater and says that when the perfect (the complete) came, the

incomplete (that which was in part, miracles) would be done away with.

1. This makes sense. If someone has a tool that only does half the job that is needed and then later buys a tool that does everything that is needed, he is not going to use the old tool any more. Why would he use the old tool, if the new one is better and does everything he needs?
  2. Could he go back and use the old tool? He could, but the question is, why would he? If he has a perfect tool that does everything he needs, why would he go back to use a tool that only does part of the job?
  3. Does God have the power to use miracles after the arrival of “the perfect”? Of course. God is all powerful and can do whatever he wants, but again the question is, why would he use miracles among men if he already has his perfect tool and no longer needs the old one?
- C. Paul uses the illustration of a growing child in *v. 11*. When a man grows, he leaves behind the childish things.
1. When I was a child, I used to sit in a highchair, but now that I have grown up, I have left behind my highchair (childish things). Its purpose has been completed and there is no more necessity for it.
  2. As an adult, could I still go sit in my highchair if I wanted to? I guess I could, but again, why? I have no more need of it. Could God use miracles among men even after having the perfect if he wanted to? Surely God has the power, but Paul describes miracles as childish things. With “the perfect” God and man would have no more need of them.
- D. In *v. 12*, Paul says that in the first century current situation, Christians saw dimly and knew partially, but in the future they would see clearly, face to face, and would know fully. In the first century, mirrors were not like the mirrors we have today. They were more like a piece of polished metal. One could see the face, but the image was not clear. Paul said they saw as if through a mirror, but later, with the perfect, would see face to face.
1. Before marriage, my wife and I spent a lot of time talking on the phone because we lived in different states. Talking on the phone was something we enjoyed, but when we had opportunity to visit in person, I never said, “Wait a minute. I want to talk to you – I’ll get my phone and call you.” The phone was useful, but when we were together, face to face, we had something perfect.

- E. God used miracles as a tool to reveal and confirm, but they only did part of the job. When “the perfect” came (complete revelation), the incomplete was done away. God no longer gave men miraculous spiritual gifts or special, supernatural revelation.
- F. The critical question is what is “the perfect”? What is perfect and complete revelation? Today, we have something that the early Christians did not: the complete Bible. *2 Timothy 3:16-17* says that the scriptures are complete and that they give revelation that makes the man of God complete and equipped for every good work. In *Ephesians 3:3-4*, Paul says that through his letter, we can understand about the mystery of Christ. *Jude 3* says that the faith was revealed once for all time.
- G. The Bible is complete. According to the word of God, in our hands we have the fullness of revelation, “the perfect”. Now, God has his perfect tool and through this book, we have everything he wants us to know. And now, what did he promise to do with that which was in part (miracles)?

#### Conclusion

- A. Some today believe that God speaks to us through prophets, through other recent books, through dreams and feelings, etc. But we need ask, if we have the Bible, what else do we need? What is the Bible lacking? We need to be careful when a person says he has more revelation than is given in the Bible: an extra book that we have to read to be saved, or a modern-day prophet we have to hear to know the revelation of God.
- B. Let us understand and appreciate the blessing we have in the Bible, God’s full and complete revelation, and let us read the Bible and listen to the voice of God. Does God speak today? Yes! He speaks through his written word. In the Bible, “we have the mind of Christ” (*1 Corinthians 2:16*).