

## LOOKING TO PEOPLE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE INSTEAD OF TO GOD

Opening Questions:

- If God sent one perfect Messenger to convey His will and He succeeded, why would He send more imperfect messengers?
- If The Messenger said, "Many will come in my name and mislead/deceive many," why would you listen to other supposed messengers who come in his name?
- Why would God supernaturally communicate to one person and not another? Doesn't He love and care about every person?
- If many people have hallucinations about spiritual things, why would you think that those hallucinations are from God?

Spiritual Leaders, Prophets, Oracles, etc.:

Looking to other living people is perhaps the second most popular way that people use to hear from God and to know things about God. (It is often closely tied to the first way, the scripture, since most of the people who claim to be hearing directly or clearly from God reference the scripture to some degree to bolster their authority.) There is no shortage of people who claim to hear directly from God or to be some spiritual leader or who claim to know God and are willing to share that with others - usually for something in return, even if just to be recognized as someone hearing from God. From the pope in the Vatican to the village shaman to the local pastor, people are quick to claim to represent God, and the masses are quick to look to other people to hear from God. There is a tendency in us to look to others for help, and spiritual guidance is indeed not exempt from this tendency. In fact, it is widespread.

There are hundreds of thousands of books written by Christian authors, leaders, authorities, ministers, preachers, pastors, scholars; and at least as many Bible-based leaders on the earth today. From the hugely popular television evangelist who speaks to millions at a time, to the president of some influential Christian "ministry," to the local pastor at the small religious organization in the country - each of these people has one thing in common. They are claiming to represent God - or know some critical communication from God - and thus people ought to listen to them to know God and His will for their life.

However, there is a significant flaw in this method. That flaw is that all people are imperfect and have faults, including those who claim to have some specialized knowledge of God that they want to impart to others. *Thus, it seems unreasonable that a perfect God could communicate flawlessly through imperfect people.*

What does Joshua say to his followers about this? Does he address who his disciples are to look to, and listen to, in order to hear from God and know God? Yes, he does very clearly. Please listen to him:

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Matthew 11:27)

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. (John 5:22-23)

But do not be called Master; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Messiah. (Matthew 23:8-10)

You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. (John 13:13)

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. [*Or God and any other master*] (Matthew 6:24)

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd/pastor. (John 10:16)

Calling them to himself, Joshua said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of those who have no knowledge of my Father (Gentiles) lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. (Mark 10:42-44)

Joshua of Nazareth leaves no doubt as to whom his followers are to listen to in order to know God and His will for their lives. Let us review his words above again in a summary format:

- Joshua's Father, the true and living God, is only known perfectly by Joshua and whomever Joshua wills to reveals his Father to;
- The Father has given Joshua all judgment, and thus all people will stand before Joshua as the sole judge of the life they lived on earth;
- Joshua tells his followers that he is to be their only Master, Teacher, Shepherd/Pastor, Leader;
- To make it abundantly clear regarding how his followers/disciples are to view other disciples of his, he says that we are to consider each other as equal brothers who have no authority over one another but instead seek to be each other's servants.

Are you, dear reader, unclear as to what Joshua teaches concerning the source of knowledge and understanding of his Father? If you are confused or unclear, it is because you are not listening carefully to him:

Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So you are a king?" Joshua answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears **my** voice". (John 18:37)

Can YOU hear HIS voice, dear reader, truly? Or is your spirit dead to the Word of Life? Or are you listening to many other voices who say they represent his voice? Have you been deceived into believing that Paul's voice or Moses' voice or Preacher Popular's voice or Bible scholar so-and-so is the same as HIS voice? Or are you listening to the many "christs" created by the thousands of Bible believing leaders or even your imagination? Have you rejected all "jesus" religion based on the *Hasty Generalization* fallacy?

Some write to this author and say, "well, why should we listen to you? Aren't you asking people to listen to you, and thus making the same error you are accusing others of making?" My reply is, "don't listen to me unless I accurately repeat Joshua's truths, and better still, listen *first* to the One I am pointing you to". That should be the reply of every true disciple of the Light. Again, please listen to him, for he claims that he is the perfect manifestation of the true and living God:

Joshua said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9)

I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world. (John 8:26)

So Joshua said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught me. And He who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him". (John 8:28-29)

I speak the things which I have seen with my Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. (John 8:36)

For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me. (John 12:49-50)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does His works. (John 14:10)

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Messiah Joshua whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

So, for the disciple of Joshua, we have one person we look to in order to both know God and to hear from God. And we have a perfect person through whom a perfect God can speak through, and thus we can be assured that there is no human flaw corruption in the words of the one who calls himself the Light of the world. Please listen to him:

But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God. (John 8:45-47)

When a Bible believing person hears these truths, they often respond with, "well, your position is contradictory or self-defeating because imperfect people wrote down Joshua's words. While it is true that imperfect people wrote down the Perfect One's Words, the issue is did the Perfect One's perfect words/teachings/concepts get recorded accurately - is it possible that imperfect people could accurately write down what they saw and heard? Stated another way, could imperfect people (people with character flaws and moral faults) hear a perfect person's words and accurately record them? *The answer is yes, it certainly is possible.* And if the imperfect ones did accurately capture the Perfect One's Words and deeds, then we have a reliable standard. (Please note, what is it about Bible people that they resist listening only to Joshua who they claim is their god? Why is it that they are largely ignorant of Joshua's core teachings?)

To illustrate this important point from a different perspective, please consider this question. Is it possible for a young or immature mathematician to

write down the basic teachings of Einstein which they heard him teach, even if they had personal faults and weaknesses? The answer is yes. So, while only Einstein may have had perfect understanding of a particular mathematical concept, others who knew very little about his advanced math could successfully record what he said if he used terms they could understand. The same is true of the Light of the world. Joshua of Nazareth used simple, understandable terms/words to tell the world who he is, why he came, and what he wants, and imperfect men were able to capture and preserve his perfect teachings/concepts/truths in what people call the four gospels.

## Revelations, Visions, and Dreams

The third primary way people claim to hear from God is directly through visions, revelations or dreams. This method is prevalent, and in fact, many religions are built on this method. A person, the founder of the religion, supposedly has a vision/revelation/dream from God, and then either shares it with others verbally, and/or writes down their vision/ revelation/dream, and that vision becomes their future follower's holy scripture or sacred writings and thus the basis of another religion or sect within a religious system. Examples would include the Mormons with Joseph Smith's writings; Paulians (those who look to Paul to know God) due to his Damascus road experience; or those who focus on the book of Revelation in the Bible. Those are all examples within Christianity. Outside of Christianity, Islam would be an example of the former (Mohammed's writings).

Perhaps the main reason this method of trying to hear from God, and thus know God, is so popular is that it cannot be proved to be wrong - unless a person has a standard against which to judge its content/message as true or false. Unfortunately, when a person is in the realm of "only-I-experienced-it," typically the only standard that person will submit to is "I" - they are the only standard to judge the message or the experience (vision, revelation, or dream) as true or false. And of course, this is also true of those who listen to them or follow them. This method/claim of hearing from God has always been popular but is particularly popular in this age of relativism and emotionalism, where each person makes up their reality. The other side of that coin - that which is very unpopular - is believing that absolute truth exists (has been given to humanity) to which all people will be held accountable - the very claim of the one who calls himself "the truth" against which all human beings will be judged.

Perhaps the second most popular reason for believing that God communicates directly to individuals through means other than prayer is because it removes faith from a relationship with God. You see, if God communicates directly with me, I don't need any faith to believe and trust in Him. By definition, faith requires a person to trust in God with no direct or personal evidence to validate that God exists.

For the follower of Joshua, the only exception to this was when Joshua visited the earth the first time and performed miracles to prove who he was.

Those who saw/experienced his miracles had evidence on which to base their faith. However, concerning signs from God, Joshua said:

This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. (Luke 11:29)

And;

We must work the works of Him who sent me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. (John 9:4-5)

Therefore, once the Light left the world and went back to the Father, no more signs would be given. We will look at this more closely in the upcoming chapter *The Comforting Christian Delusions*.

He concluded this line of thought by saying:

Joshua said to him, "Because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed". (John 20:29)

In other words, those who have a faith that trusts with no evidence are in a better potential place of blessing than those who had evidence.

*Please don't confuse prayer and a vision.* Prayer, as Joshua of Nazareth teaches, is merely a person speaking to/communicating with God with no physical evidence that God is listening. Prayer involves a personal communication with God, NOT new information (revelation) from God or who God is, or what He is like, or how He worked or is going to work - prayer has no such "new information" aspect in this regard - it is purely present tense relational.

A vision, revelation or dream, on the other hand, is a real or perceived real spiritual/mental event where new information or insight is received or understood (or perceived as "given by God") by the person experiencing the event. They claim new information or insight regarding who God is, what He is like, or how He worked (past) or is going to work (future). While the information created or understood in the event is metaphysical (no physical evidence can be offered to support it), it is none-the-less perceived and understood by the person as "evidence" to them of the genuineness of the new information - in other words, the experience itself validates the content of the new information. Of course, this is circular (and thus erroneous) reasoning to use the event to validate itself - in other words, "because I had a vision, revelation or dream about the kingdom of God, it must be true." Not so - this is a false statement. In contrast, if you come to believe something that the Light of the world validates as correct through his recorded teachings then it is from God.

Finally, this method is prevalent because it is easy to get other people to listen to YOU, perhaps the Only Person in your area who is having such

communications from God. This reason is closely associated with the first reason, as it is virtually impossible for other people to discern whether the claim is valid or not because they often have no standard to judge claims as true or false. They must rely solely on the word or testimony of the person who claimed to have the vision, revelation or dreams. And if they are drifting about spiritually - if they have no standard to judge such claims - then they are very open to believing such claims. I hope the reader can see the effectiveness and popularity of this method of trying to hear from God, from those who want other people relying upon (or even just listening to) *them* to hear from God.

This author would suggest that listening to the one who defeated death and showed us what real love is would be the best One choice.

Does Joshua address visions, revelations, and dreams? Yes, he does, sometimes directly, but mostly indirectly. You see, Joshua could not address every possible spiritual claim that people in the future would make. But he did leave his followers principles and teachings that address people claiming to have unique insight into God by whatever means, including visions, revelations, and dreams. Here are the relevant instructions of the Light in this respect. After each teaching, I will make a brief comment about the teaching and the underlined section as it relates to the topic of visions, revelations, and dreams.

### Addressing the “New Information from God” claim

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Matthew 11:27)

The saying, "nor does anyone know the Father except the Son" makes Joshua of Nazareth the only reliable source of knowing God, period. He does say further that he will reveal his Father to whom he chooses, and he makes it clear in other teachings that he can only reveal his Father to his disciples due to their faith (see John 15:15; Matt. 13:10-12 where he says regarding non-disciples, "to them, it has not been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"). Unlike their Master, however, Joshua's disciples are imperfect, and thus they cannot do better than their Master. Therefore, only the Son can accurately reveal the Father, and thus no accurate new information is possible unless he said that he would appear to people after his ascension, in visions or dreams.

No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Joshua plainly says, "all things," and so we understand that he revealed everything about the Father that he heard from the Father. One could argue that the Father would tell more things to others who came after Joshua.

However, someone claiming they had new information from God should be very suspect given that Joshua said that no one perfectly knows the Father except himself (Matt. 11:27; John 3:13); and that many would come in his name after him, and would deceive many.

It is a true statement that a perfect God could not reveal his truths more accurately and clearly through an imperfect person than He could reveal through his only Perfect Son. God did speak through His Son, and that Son spoke much about the future. Therefore, since the Son heard directly from the Father, and he taught his followers what the Father said, we can conclude that the Son conveyed all the critical things that his Father wanted Joshua and his followers to know, including future events. It is possible that those who wrote down Joshua's Words did omit some of his teachings regarding future events. However, there would be no way to verify that and thus that speculation leads nowhere. In conclusion, no new information would be necessary for the follower of Joshua of Nazareth regarding the fundamental teachings of the Kingdom of God, since the Son/King perfectly revealed the Father and His will.

For false Christ's and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance. (Mark 13:22-23)

This teaching and warning from the Light provide two points which directly speak to the "new information" aspect of communication from God by personal visions, revelations, and dreams. First, he warns that people will make claims about personal knowledge they have about or from God and will perform fake miracles to deceive people into listening to their message. This point is dire, but sadly is mostly ignored as people are lining up by the millions to listen to people claiming to speak new truths from God, but who are not. And what defense does the real Messiah give his followers against such powerful deceptions? Simple - "I have told you everything in advance." So, the Light of the world told his first followers all the information they needed to know so that they would not be led astray by others claiming to speak for God. If he told them everything in advance, and the gospel writers included all the salient points he gave them, then no new information would be forthcoming regarding the kingdom of God.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. (John 10:8)

This saying eliminates all people who came before Joshua and who claimed to be God's spokesperson to humanity - who claimed to be God's anointed bearer of Truth.

Next, we will take a look at the topic of the Holy Spirit and the primary false claims associated with that topic.



Chapter Summary:

- Listening to people *other* than The Messenger is **the** mistake which causes human beings to be lost;
- God does *not* send dreams, visions or “revelations” to people;
- God does *not* send new information about Himself – what He is like, what He did, is doing or will do;
- There is One perfect revelation of God, Joshua of Nazareth, and by listening to him alone, a person cannot go astray.