

# MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

CALVIN JAMES

Much of the plan of God is reflected in three verses of scripture (Genesis 1:26-28), “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

Bro. Oldridge once commented on this portion of Scripture, and I agree with his analysis. He said, “He (God) hasn’t changed his mind regarding this even though man distorted it and disrupted it. It (man’s dominion) was to be under God. If he (man) was to rule he must be under God and God working in his life.” God is going to rule through man. Bro. A. Hinchliff puts it this way concerning God’s purpose in creating sons, “God will establish His kingdom on the earth through the ministry of those who enter into sonship.”

So, how do we position ourselves to have God rule the earth through us, His sons? Bro. P. Siemans in pondering this same question during his time at Bible school gave these thoughts, “... We need to learn to wait upon the Lord. This was stressed to us so much in the early part of the Move. It was said that when we read God’s word, God is talking to you and when you

waited in quietness before God, God would speak to you.” If we are to truly allow God to use us as his sons to have dominion on the earth, it is important that we are able to hear God’s voice. I would like to share a few thoughts along this line.

## The Principle Of Hearing God’s Voice

If one were to trace God’s interaction with man after his rebellion, one would notice that the way God dealt with man evolved after every dispensation. A dispensation can be considered as a specific period of time during which God has set an order or a system as to how life operates and functions.

There are seven dispensations in Scripture: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and the Millennial kingdom. Let’s look at three of the dispensations.

1. **The Dispensation of Promise:** During this dispensation, God governed through the Patriarchs. Patriarchs refer to the fathers of families such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
2. **The Dispensation of Law:** In this dispensation we see God dealing with Israel as a collective nation. Israel was put under a special law that was specifically for them. This law didn’t apply entirely to other nations. Also, during this dispensation, Israel had a temple and priests.

3. **The Dispensation of Grace:** This dispensation was really a proclamation to the entire human species, regardless of ethnicity or tribe. The proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (which is also known as the gospel of grace) during the Dispensation of Grace requires an individual response.

In these three dispensations, God's requirements for man were different. Yet, despite the differences, there remained one prevailing requirement that God expected from man in each of those dispensations, and that was that man would hear the voice of God.

#### Hearing God's Voice In the Dispensations of Promise and Law

During the Dispensation of Promise, God called out Abraham (formally called Abram) and made a covenant with him most often referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant which was a covenant of promise (Genesis 12:1-4). Abraham heard the voice of God and obeyed it. The Dispensation of Law began with the Israelites exodus from Egypt. God destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. The Israelites were walking through the desert on the other side of the Red Sea with no water in sight (read Exodus 15:22-25). After three days of walking through the dry sands of the desert, they came across a pool of water. However, they could not use it because the water was bitter. So what did Moses do? He called on God for help, and God showed him what he must do. You see, God was patiently training the Israelites in the path to victory during their journey, and they were simply obeying the voice of God. Every time they called on God for help and they obeyed His voice, the blessing of God was upon them.

In Exodus 15:26, God made this point clear again. If the Israelites would continue to obey His voice, during their journey to the Promised Land, He would keep them from all the diseases that He had put upon the Egyptians. Later on, in the Israelites journey out of Egypt through the wilderness of Sinai, God reached out to the growing Hebrew nation with a call for a true relationship with him. Exodus 19:3-6, *"And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called on him out of the mountain, Say this to the house of Jacob and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey My voice in truth and keep My covenant, then you shall be My peculiar possession and treasure from among and above all peoples; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the Israelites."* Notice here again, the primary emphasis is for the people to obey the voice of God. Then they would be a unique people, different from all other people; living on a higher level and area of blessing than was known to the other peoples. The primary condition for this to happen was for Israel to listen to and obey the voice of God.

The nation of Israel had matured somewhat and in Deuteronomy 28:1-2 Moses again reminded them of what God had said, *"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God."* Notice it begins and ends with the call to diligently listen to the voice of God and the result of listening diligently to the voice of God are *"...ALL these blessings..."* (read Deuteronomy 28:3-14). An opposite picture presents itself if they decided NOT to listen to the voice of God nor obey His voice (read Deuteronomy 28:15-22).

Finally, Israel was a mature nation-state with a government, a king, a temple, priests and laws, but had God's principal requirement changed? In Jeremiah 7:21-23, the scriptures tell us, *"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat the flesh For in the day that I brought you out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing I did command them: Listen to and obey My voice, and I will be your God and you will be My people: and walk in the whole way that I command you, that it may be well with you."* This portion of scripture summarizes the principal thing; the essential requirement of the children of Israel was to listen to and to obey the voice of God. This

principle had never changed down through the dispensation. But, what was Israel's problem? Let's continue reading Jeremiah 7:24-26, *"But they would not listen to and obey Me or bend their ear to Me. But followed the counsels and the stubborn promptings of their own evil hearts and minds, and they turned their backs and went in reverse instead of forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent to you all My servants the prophets, sending them daily, early and late. Yet the people would not listen to and obey me or bend their ears to Me, but stiffened their necks and behaved worse than their fathers."* In short, God had no interest in their religious exercises. He wanted to have a personal relationship with them.

Now, let's look at this present dispensation and the teachings of Jesus to determine if this essential requirement still holds:

If we look at John 10:3-15 we see from scripture that as we translate into this new and present dispensation, a lot has changed but the essential requirement remains the same. Now, up until verses 15 Jesus was referring to the Hebrews. Jesus echoes the prophecy of Jeremiah to the Jews who preferred religion over relationship. He was reminding them that to be a REAL Jew had nothing to do with burnt offerings and sacrifices but had everything to do with being able to hear His voice. What about us Gentiles? Glory be to God, we were not forgotten, for the scripture tells us in John 10:16, *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."* So, we see from this scripture that the non-Israelite will be brought into the fold, and the basis by which the Gentiles come into the fold is by being able to hear and obey the voice of Jesus.

Saints, that's why I don't believe in Christian unity that is driven by denominationalism or doctrinal or theological belief systems. JESUS says that the distinctive mark of ALL believers is that they hear His voice. Therefore, true Christian unity comes when we ALL begin to hear and obey the voice of our Lord Jesus the Christ.

Therefore, the essential requirement of hearing God's voice is summed up in John 10:27. From scripture we see that there are three things that characterize true believers or followers of Jesus:

1. They hear his voice.
2. He knows them; he recognizes them; he acknowledges them
3. They follow Him

It was God's intention from the very beginning to establish His kingdom on earth to be administered by a people who would rule by listening to and obeying the voice of God. This group of people would be known as royal priests they would rule through communion with Christ. They each would have an intimate, individual relationship with God. The Israelites with Moses refused God's offer to them to individually obey God's voice and be His "kingdom of priests" (read Exodus 19:5-6). They wanted Moses to speak to them in place of God speaking to each of them personally (read Exodus 20:19).

In this Dispensation of Grace, God has not changed the offer to make man a "kingdom of priests" (read 1 Peter 2:5,9, Revelation 1:6, 5:10). God has torn open the temple curtain that kept the Israelites from Him (read Matthew 27:51). Each person is to know God for herself and himself in the New Covenant (read Hebrews 8:11, Jeremiah 31:33-34). God has said, "I will dwell IN them and walk IN them" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Jesus said his sheep hear His voice and follow Him (read John 10:27-28).

#### Three Distinctive Features To Hearing God's Voice

The three features to hearing God's voice are these:

1. It is Personal.
2. It's Intimate.
3. It's Present, with respect to time.

#### Hearing God's Voice Is Personal

Every voice is unique because no two voices carry the same frequency. It is this feature that gives the voice its personal and unique character. Jesus says about HIS sheep in John 10:5, *"And a stranger will they not follow,*

but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of a stranger.” You see, the stranger may say the correct words, but if it does not carry the frequency of the Master, His sheep will flee from that voice, because it’s the voice of a stranger.

In many banks, there are vaults that would only open to the voice of the vault custodian, and no other voice can cause that vault to unlock. The heart of the believer is like that bank vault. It only opens to the Lord himself. We can come into all sorts of grief and problems if we open the door of our heart to the wrong voice. So hearing God’s voice is personal.

### Hearing God’s Still Small Voice Is Intimate

*“So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ So he said, ‘I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.’ Then He said, ‘Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’” (1 Kings 19:8-13)?*

Hearing the voice of God requires a personal and intimate relationship with God. Scripture tells us that if we draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us (see James 4:8). God’s voice is most often still and small, and we must be still and quiet to hear it.

### Hearing God’s Voice is Present

The third feature about hearing God’s voice is that it is always present. Many people often relate to the PAST experiences of their walk with God, and that has its place in the believer’s walk. After all, we are where we are because of the obedience of the saints in times PAST who listened to the voice of God. There are also those believers who focus on their future life with Jesus in heaven; and this also has its place as well. But one should always remember, the voice of God is always PRESENT.

Now, the experience Moses had when he was asked by God to go and talk with the children of Israel illustrates this fact, that God’s voice is always PRESENT (read Exodus 3:13-14). From scripture, we note that Moses wanted to know how he should respond if the children of Israel enquire from him asking, “what is his name?” God’s simple and everlasting response to Moses was “I Am Who I Am.”

I AM is present, it’s not past, it’s not future. So too is our relationship with God. It has to be in the NOW. And as we learn to hear God’s voice we come to that point where we have a personal, present relationship with the Lord.

### The Application of This Principle

There are many outcomes that may result from hearing God’s voice. For the purpose of this lesson, let’s focus on one outcome and see how the principle of hearing God’s voice applies - FAITH.

Now, the Scriptures tell us that hearing God’s voice produces faith (read Romans 10:17). So, according to the Scriptures when we hear God’s voice it should produce faith. In this scripture you just read, the voice of God is called the “word” of God. Therefore, let’s spend some time understanding what this means, for example, to hear the word of God or voice of God, because it is only when we truly hear God’s voice that God’s glory is produced in us.

### The Word of God

In the New Testament, there are two Greek words that when translated to English become “word.” These are two distinct Greek words, ‘logos’ and ‘rhema.’

### Logos

Logos is a comprehensive Greek word which simply means “mind” or “counsel.” In scripture, logos means the mind or counsel of God; it is God’s total purpose. The Collins English Dictionary describes logos like this, “...reason, regarded as the controlling principle of the universe.” So, we can also say that logos is the principle of God. The counterpart Hebrew word for logos is dabar which when translated into English also becomes “word.” Dabar, like logos, is the meaning of principles or counsel or decree. So in Psalms 119:89, David says that God’s word (principles or counsel) never changes; it’s settled forever. And this is the distinguishing feature of logos; it never changes. God’s principles never change.

Today, this logos, this counsel of God, is summed up in a person (read John 1:1-5,14). According to Scripture, Jesus is the personification of logos. Jesus is the total counsel, purpose and mind of God so that if you encounter Jesus you encounter God and His will (read John 14:9). Also, logos or the principles of God can be found in ALL the Scripture. If you want to know God’s will for your life, Peter encourages us to desire the word (logos) or Scriptures. Paul admonishes the elders, through his writings to Timothy, that they spend time in the word (logos) or Scriptures (read 1 Timothy 5:17). Today our Bibles should be considered the logos of God.

### Rhema

“Logos is the general word of God that communicates His ability to do something or His general will on a matter while rhema is the word the Holy Spirit quickens to a specific person for a specific situation” (author unknown).

To establish the precise meaning of rhema, I invite you to read the following scriptures: John 3:34, Acts 2:14, Acts 5:20, Acts 10:34, 2 Corinthians 13:1 and Hebrews 11:3. There are many more scriptures we could use to illustrate the point, but the point is this, rhema is only rhema when the word is spoken; whether it be the quoting of scriptures from the Bible or utterances. Rhema is the spoken word.

Logos is the whole counsel of God. The Holy Spirit measures it out to us in a rhema, in a word that is spoken to us, in a word that we personally receive. In other words, the whole counsel of God is imparted to us in portions we are able to receive called rhema.

Now, let’s go back to Romans 10:17. Applying what we have just learned about the use of the English expression, ‘word,’ we can conclude that the correct Greek expression for ‘word’ in this scripture is rhema, “...*hearing the word (rhema) of God.*” As kingdom citizens, as God’s sheep, if we are NOT able to hear God’s voice our faith is weak. This principle applies to ALL areas of our lives. Let me cite two examples:

Logos tells us in Isaiah 53:5, “...*and with His stripes we are healed.*”. Logos tells us in James 5:14, “*Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church...*” These are the everlasting PRINCIPLES of God; they will NEVER change. So, imagine a young father holding his first baby boy who is screaming because of pain, and who has a very high temperature. He doesn’t know how to make the pain go away. He doesn’t know how to make his child stop crying. Then, the Spirit of the Lord speaks (rhema) into his heart, “call the elders.”

Again, logos tells us in Ephesians 5:25, “*Husbands, love your wives...*” But, I want to tell you from eleven years of experience that it is only the rhema, that voice you hear deep in your spirit that tells you how to love your wife. This does not imply that we forsake the couples retreats and other activities where the logos will be ministered. After you have heard the word (logos), be careful to listen to the voice (rhema) of God so that you can effectively apply His word (logos) in your life.

What we should notice from these examples is that rhema is based on Scripture, but it’s a lot more than Bible scriptures. Rhema is the personal word of God; it’s God’s voice speaking to you. Just as faith comes by rhema, so too we need this rhema for all other areas of our lives and it is this rhema that God will use to rule the earth through man.

### The Lifestyle That Results From Hearing God's Voice

To begin this segment let's look at Matthew 4: 4 which says, "...It has been written, 'Man shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God'" (Amplified Bible). Here Jesus is comparing rhema with bread and from this comparison, we can conclude that just as natural bread is important for feeding the natural body so is the present, personal word of God important for feeding man's inner being, his spirit. We can say, based on Scripture, that rhema nourishes the spirit of man. We need rhema to keep the spirit alive and healthy. The personal, present word, the voice of the Lord coming to us is that spiritual bread that keeps our souls alive.

Now, this rhema only comes through the Holy Spirit, and that's why the reading of the Bible as a religious act does not produce rhema but rather the Holy Spirit moving upon the written word producing rhema (read 2 Corinthians 3:6). As such, we are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that brings to us, in any given situation, the rhema that we need. If God decides to speak to you through the Holy Scripture, it is the Holy Spirit that quickens the logos and makes it a living voice rhema. It is the Holy Spirit that is guiding and directing us all day, everyday, by the rhema that He gives us.

Romans 8:14 suggests that if we are led by the Spirit of God we are sons of God. In other words, it is only when we are led by the Spirit that we grow into maturity, into sonship. To be led by the Holy Spirit means that we must be able to hear the rhema or word of God and be guided accordingly. Notice, only when we make this an ongoing process or it becomes our lifestyle that we grow into maturity. It's not something that happens once or just at the Sunday morning service, but something that's continually going on all the time in our daily lives. It is our daily bread.

Jesus began each day listening to our Father. These are some of the results of that lifestyle:

- He had words of encouragement for others.
- He received personal direction each day for himself.
- He received the strength to obey. Hearing God's voice produced obedience in Jesus.
- He received strength to go through all that he had to go through. He needed more than human strength to climb upon the cross; he needed supernatural strength. And he received this supernatural strength from listening to and obeying the Father's voice.
- He received determination.

All of the above, and much more, came to Jesus when he ordered His life according to hearing and obeying the Father's voice. All this, and much more, will come to us when we cultivate the habit of letting the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, open our ears each morning so that we can hear and obey our Father's voice (rhema). It is when we cultivate this lifestyle that we present ourselves mature enough to accomplish Genesis 1:26-28. When we mature to the point that we speak and act only at the direction of the Holy Spirit we will be capable of taking on kingdom administration responsibility.

### Our Daily Life Is Where Our Ministry Functions

I want to end this lesson by quoting a few paragraphs from the writings of Bro. A. Hinchliff. He noted in his teaching entitled *The Gospel of the Kingdom* that, "The Kingdom of God is to restore order to His creation. The curse that came in Eden will be done away. Jesus came to deliver from the curse, and He will bring it to pass through the ministry of His body."

So, the plan of God is to use us, the body, His mature ones, His sons to rule the earth. But, this must be balanced by us being able to hear and obey the voice of God. Listen to what Bro. Hinchliff teaches in his writing on obedience.

"There are so many things that come into our lives from day to day in which God would desire us to minister. I was once acquainted with a man to whom it was prophesied that he would have a ministry of giving. He went on for some time without giving anything, saying that he was waiting for God to enable him to give something big. He should have walked in the ministry that God had given him, and if all he had to give was a cup of cold water he wouldn't have lost his reward. God would then have increased his ability to give. All God requires is that we be faithful with that which He has given. God's mind is that we be led by the Spirit and not wait until we can do some spectacular thing."

He goes on to note that, "We think that to be obedient there is some great sacrifice of obedience. But God asks us to be obedient in the little things that come up continually. It is necessary that we prove our obedience, as Jesus proved His obedience. I am thankful to God for his patience towards us. Let us pray that we may always hear His voice."

Finally, "Don't always be looking for the big things, but be looking for those things that are all around us, that the Spirit of God leads you to, and your ministry will be effective. God's mind and will for all of us is to walk in the calling that He has given us. Our ministry is a part of our life and being, and it is impossible to separate it from us. Our ministry gets up every morning and goes to bed with us at night. It goes with us to work and is with us in our leisure time. It may not always be in evidence but our ministry is always with us and we should listen to the voice of the Spirit that it may become active at any time according to His bidding, whether it is at the meeting, or we are at work or wherever we are. This is the road into Sonship."✝

## GLOBAL MISSIONS INC.

Global Missions Inc. was founded in 1944, as a Christian mission to promote and encourage the preaching of the gospel to every creature.

Global Missions reaches into many countries in Africa, India, the Caribbean, the United States of America, South America and the Philippines. These local churches are established on the foundational truths revealed in God's word and through His unfolding revelation. Local churches are governed by local residents who are referred to as elders.

Global Missions is a nondenominational Christian church.

Headquarters:

802 Airport Road  
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 934  
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:

(306) 445-2733

Email:

info@globalmissionsinc.org

Online:

www.globalmissionsinc.org

Traveling Ministry Contact List:

www.globalmissionsinc.org/about

## SHARON STAR

The Sharon Star is a monthly publication and mailed as a free-will offering plan. The articles within are intended for inspiration and information to those who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by:

Global Missions Inc. in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Sharon Star is found online at:

www.globalmissionsinc.org/sharon-star

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206

Subscribe by mail or online.