

HEARING GOD'S VOICE SERIES

THE AUDIBLE VOICE OF GOD

In this message, we want to talk about the audible voice of Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts, we have an incident that we will look at. We will bring certain incidents together. We will include some passages from John and some from I Samuel to see the audible voice of God. God does speak audibly although God does not speak audibly many times. But when we talk about audible, it is more or less a spiritual voice that has a side effect on the natural sound waves or that produces certain sound waves in the natural. Sometimes the voice is discernible but some times, it is indiscernible.

Please understand that we are touching on the 5 percent area of the normal way the Spirit operates; 95 percent of the time the Holy Spirit speaks through the inward witness and the inward voice of the Holy Spirit. The other 5 percent are what we call the spectacular. All 100 percent are supernatural but some supernatural things are not quite that spectacular. Like for example when we speak in tongues and we just come before God, that is supernatural but it's not quite so spectacular. And in the same manner, we see that there are some things that are very spectacular, and audible voice is very spectacular. I mean it's not every day that God will speak with His audible voice, lightening flashing, thunder roaring, earth shaking, angels singing and the booming voice of God comes down and says, "Thus says the Lord of Hosts." It's not every day but yet the audible voice can be heard but not understood. That is the amazing thing if you understand that the audible voice of God can occur. In other words, there is a spiritual vibration caused by the spiritual voice speaking. And it affects and has a side effect on the natural realm and there

are some natural voices that are heard where some people could hear it and not understand it. Some can hear it and think it's some thing else. It doesn't occur every day. So after this teaching when you go out and you hear a sound like *woo, woo*, don't automatically say that it's the audible voice of God. On the other hand, we realize that maybe God wants to speak to us that we may have missed out. This is the purpose of this teaching.

Acts 9 we have Paul who was not an apostle yet but called to be an apostle. On his way to Damascus, he was sitting on his donkey. As he was sitting on his donkey going to persecute the Christians, the power of God shone upon him. Jesus Christ looks down from His throne of glory. Jesus didn't come to this planet earth. Jesus looks down from His throne of glory. Jesus wanted to speak to Paul some thing. So, the angels open the windows of heaven and Jesus speaks out through the windows in heaven and said, "Saul, Saul." That little opening was so great that Paul fell off his donkey. That's the glory of God. Some of us are saying, "Lord send Thy glory." Some times, we know not what we ask. There was just a little bit of God's glory and Paul was thrown from his donkey. While he was down on the floor, he heard the voice of Jesus through the mediation of the Holy Spirit who was the channel of telephone line.

He heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Then Paul says, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord says, "I am Jesus." That was frightening for him. He was against Jesus. He was after Jesus' disciples. And here Jesus said, "I am Jesus." Then Jesus began to speak to him about his life, about his ministry. We believe that Saul was born again at the same time. How do we know that he was born again? No. 1 when he addresses the Lord, he called Him Lord. No. 2 the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned him to the ministry. In Acts 26, Paul was sharing his testimony and he said how Jesus Christ sent him to be a witness. Jesus said that He has called him to be a minister onto the Gentiles to whom now He sends him. Jesus will never send an unbeliever. So obviously, something has happened - Paul was now born again. At the very instant when he met Jesus there was that glory that came, he responded, and there was this born again experience the mystery of God. That is the second reason. The third reason why we believe that he is born again is that when Ananias came to see Saul and he was at Damascus waiting at a certain place. When Ananias he saw Saul and he said brother Saul. You wouldn't call a person brother in the New Testament unless he is born

again.

But as he heard this audible voice of God, there were other people with Saul. On the way, there when God spoke to him something happened to his companions. Acts 9:7 *The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.* They heard a voice but they saw no one. That is insufficient for teaching we need Acts 22 in order to give more background before we can draw some principles from that. In Acts 22 Paul in sharing his testimony in verse 7 *And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said I to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting."* Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. Incidentally, it was about mid-day when the sun was at its peak and yet there was a greater light that shine down upon them.

But his next phase is interesting when you compare to Acts 9. It says in verse 9 *Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the One who was speaking to me.* Isn't it funny in Acts 9 it says they heard the voice and in Acts 22 it says they did not hear the voice. Thus, the bible contradicts itself, no. Every time you think there was a contradiction, it is more because there is a revelation. When you find the revelation involved, it will harmonize the seemingly contradictory scriptures. The scriptures do not contradict at all.

You will find in some scriptures it tells us that Judas went and hang himself. It's in the gospel. Then in the book of Acts chapter one it tells us that Judas fell down and his bowels gushed out and he died. The question is how did Judas die. Some times when you witness to people, they ask, how did Judas die? How Judas died is not concerned with you right now. Then when you witness to some people they ask you, where did Cain get his wife. Where did Cain get his wife is another question but where are you going after this life is a more important question. When you are right there on the brink of eternity, you are about to die off not knowing what will happen in eternity and you are asking where did Cain get his wife. Get saved first then find out where. So here is a seeming contradiction but that is not. Incidentally, Cain got his wife from one of the descendants of Adam because in those days when the bible is silent it does not mean that nothing was happening. None of the daughters of Adam were recorded. And in those times, when even one chapter has

passed in the book of Genesis, it could some times mean about one hundred years. As far as Judas was concerned, some bright Alec says that when he hanged himself the rope was a bit thin. It broke and he fell down on his stomach because he possibly was heavier on that part and there was a sharp rock underneath where he was hanging and it pierced him right on the stomach. But if you study the bible language, the word hang is actually in the infinity tense. They should have put the word "to" there. He went to hang. Possibly, it never happened at all. He went to hang himself. Put in the incidents together as he was there in a hurry thinking to hang himself in remorse and in guilt, with ropes all over the place he tripped over and there were sharp rocks all over the place and he burst out and he died. He went to hang but he didn't hang himself yet before he fell. Anyway, that is another possibility.

Here is where Acts 9 says they heard the voice. Acts 22 tells us they did not hear the voice. In the Greek, there is an interesting ending to the "phone" which is the word *voice*. "Akouo" is the Greek word for the word *hear*. What happened is they used a special ending in the "akouo" in Acts 9 to mean they heard some thing without understanding. When you tie it back to Acts 22 where it says they did not hear the voice, it means that they did not discern the voice and what he was speaking. You could hear a sound without discerning what it means. It could be a voice that is speaking in discernable language but you did not hear the language and all the enunciation of the language in proper sound. Therefore, you could not comprehend and understand. The audible voice of Jesus just sounded like a sound to them. They heard of course Paul's conversation. They never heard the voice in a true sense. They may not even have known that it was somebody talking.

That is not the first time that such a thing occurred. In the book of John chapter 12:28 *Father, glorify Thy name. Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."* The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. They didn't hear any voice they only heard a thunder. That's all they heard. They just heard some sound and they possibly wouldn't know that it was a voice speaking. Some of them could have heard some sort of words. This was the other statement some of them made it say, "An angel has spoken to Him". Jesus and His disciples heard the actual voice that's how they could record this.

Spiritual Condition to Hear the Audible Voice

That seems strange to us because it is the same voice and how can people hear it differently? The audible voice of God is still a spiritual voice. Because it's still a spiritual voice depending on the spiritual condition or state of the hearer, they may not be able to discern it. Some people think that you will always be able to pick the audible voice up and discern it with the natural hearing. No, there still need to be a spiritual state or condition to hear. If God were to speak audibly right now, to the whole church and we were to hear the voice of God proclaiming, "Glorify Me," some of us will still not hear it. Although it's called the audible voice of God, it's still the spiritual voice that needs spiritual discernment, spiritual perception, and spiritual position to hear that voice. Otherwise, we may just say it thundered. Somebody else say, "I heard that voice saying, 'Glorify Me,' and they may get into an argument. They would think it's your imagination.

It still takes faith even though it could be an audible voice. Some of us are wishing for the audible voice then we don't need faith any more. No, you still need faith. Because there will still be those who cannot hear the audible voice. If you are not in the spiritual position even though the audible voice comes, it will be mumbled up. We will not be able to discern it. We will just say it thundered. Those who heard the voice we will say that they are imagining. The bible says there is actual voice speaking to Jesus. And there was also the voice of the Lord Jesus speaking to the apostle Paul and the rest didn't hear it. They couldn't discern the voice. It says they did not hear the voice.

What a strange occurrence in the audible voice? We began to see here that the spiritual audible voice of God could only be discerned based on our spiritual position. Sometimes we need a certain preparation to hear it. And that's where we want to see what are the conditions. We don't just want to hear it. We want to understand what we hear. We want to hear with understanding. We want to be able to receive the impartation that the voice is bringing forth. Remember this is not the common way that God speaks. But He may and He does from time to time. He can speak in signs.

When William Branham was ministering at a certain place and he was being baptized there was a voice that came as he came out from the water. An angel spoke and people saw a huge cloud that was in a figure of the Lord Jesus. And even the natural meteorology department said it's a phenomenal cloud unheard and unseen before. But the thing that is interesting is that somebody else who sees the same natural phenomena cannot see the spiritual image. Even though they could be looking at the exact thing, they could not see the spiritual image. Neither could they even hear the spiritual image. That's the strange thing for the audible voice of God is still in the spiritual realm. It only has what I call a side effect in the natural world.

When Elijah was on the mountain the bible tells us that he heard that still small voice. And when we read that scripture in I Kings chapter 19 we think that if we were there we could hear it. Not necessary so. I Kg. 19:11 *And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord."* *And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountain, and broke in pieces the rocks 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.* There was a lot of noise up there although there was nobody else but Elijah. Strong winds are not silent. Strong winds are noisy. If you have ever sat under a tree especially certain types of tree when a strong wind is blowing, it sounds some thing like people talking. There are some spiritual sounds that sound like noise to the natural. Just like if you are in a graveyard at mid-night and you are not really strong in the Lord. I can assure you that there are natural sounds you hear which you think is something else, perhaps some ghosts having a conference.

So there were this strong winds and it blew through the place. It broke the rocks so the rocks were falling; the winds were howling and then the earth was quaking. And there was this still small voice. It takes great discernment to know that is not a pussycat that got lost in the mountain. Elijah heard that still small voice. I want you to notice some thing here. When he first heard it, he didn't discern the voice yet. In spite of all these noises, he heard a noise that was not just natural a still small voice. And God apparently didn't speak to him at all yet until he walked out in response to that voice. So, he must have heard some sound that he could discern, although he could not discern what it was yet.

The bible tells us in I Kg. 19:13 *When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"* Do you notice there were differences between the still small voices and suddenly a voice came to him. There were two parts to that voice. In the first part, there was a sound but he could not discern the words. Yet in spite of all the noise, the winds were howling, the earth was quaking, and the rocks were falling and added to that the fire was burning. He heard an exceptional voice that he knows that this is God's voice trying to tell me some thing. Some of us in the natural have experienced that. Maybe your loved ones or your children who are quite far away and you hear a sound. We hear the sound, we recognize the sound but we don't discern the voice. We had to pay attention and go near and say, "Are you calling me?" You heard some sound but you are not sure whether it's the person speaking or not. It sounds like the person but you are not sure. Sometimes over the phone when the lines get very weak, you hear the person talking. You said, "Hold it you are too soft. Can you speak louder?" You hear sounds but you don't discern the voice. Apparently, there are two stages to that voice. The first part he heard a still small voice. But he knew that's God's voice. That was fantastic. The wind was howling, earth was quacking rocks were falling, fires were burning and he heard the sound and of all the sounds he know this is the one. He wrapped himself with a mantle and went out to the entrance of the cave. As he stood there then the voice said, "What are you doing here Elijah?"

It's an interesting phenomenon as we look at the voice of God. That God can speak audibly and there are some side effects on the natural. It does not mean that when God speaks we will naturally hear it. So, what are the conditions that we have to meet in order to be in a place to hear God's voice and understand it should He choose to speak audibly? There are conditions that we have to meet. They are found in the book of I Samuel chapter 3:2 *At that time Eli, whose eyesight had began to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. The Lord called, "Samuel, Samuel." And he said, "Here I am" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call you; lie down again." So, he went and lay down. And the Lord called again, "Samuel, Samuel," And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and*

went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

Within Our Sphere of Experience

Now here is the Lord calling Samuel and in verse 10 *And the Lord came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel."* Now this is in the middle of the night. Samuel was sleeping and he had never heard the audible voice of God yet. And here, he heard God audibly calling him. He could hear his name but there was a little bit of muddling here. He heard the voice as if it was Eli's voice. We all are experienced enough to know a person's voice. Sometimes people's voice does sound like each other but generally, each one has a particular voice. Everybody has a different voice. The interesting thing is that when you hear the audible voice of God you may hear it as if it was somebody else's voice. Some heard it like thunder that means it must have really sounded in the natural to that of a thunder. So, the audible voice of God does sound a lot like some natural sounds within the circumference of our experience. Sounds like sounds that we have heard in our experience. We need to discern that when God does if He so chooses.

We see in No. 1 here Samuel heard it and he thought that it was Eli. He must be so convinced to come to him three times. Remember all the other of Eli's sons was also there. Why, of so many people staying in that place he yet also says it was Eli's voice. Because it sounds like Eli's voice. The audible voice of God when you actually hear it sounds like somebody else's voice you know. And it can sound like some natural sounds that you have heard. It's just like when God brings to your mind scriptures. The scriptures He brings to you are within the circumference of your vocabulary. For example, God could say to a little teenage girl in prophecy and say, "Thus says the Lord, 'Do not be afraid, I am with you.'" Maybe to a little kid who had received the same prophecy God says, "Don't be scared." The actual words of prophecy come out differently because the vocabulary of each one of them is different. When the Holy Spirit wants to speak in a sense, He could some time supernaturally bypass the limited vocabulary of a person. But in another sense, He is also limited to the vocabulary of that person. In a sense when the audible voice of God is speaking to us, there are all these experiences and natural knowledge we

have. You would hear it to a certain extent because our mind associate a new experience with the old.

How do you learn some thing new? When you learn some thing new, you associate the new thing with the old things you have learned. For example, if you have never tasted a *durian* (a South East Asian thorny fruit) before, how do I tell you about a *durian*? She had not eaten a *durian* before. How do I describe the taste of a *durian* to her? If I were to describe to her I would have to take from her experience. I will say it has a bit of this cheese smell and you mix it with a little bit of socks that you haven't washed for two weeks. Add butter on it. So, I try to take her experience and put it together to form a new. Our natural mind works this way to learn some thing new. We take about two, three things of the old and form some thing new. Then the new thing that we learned becomes added to our knowledge then we got more things to compare now.

When we hear the audible voice of God we tends to associate with sounds that we have heard. Suppose that in the nighttime you hear this voice "nei, nei, nei." What comes to your mind? Immediately your mind would straightaway go into your computer data and pull out some sounds that sound similar. Because our mind works that way. It wants to straightaway associate it with some natural thing straight away. Should God speak audibly to you? You may hear it to be a voice of someone familiar. You may hear it to be the natural sounds that are mixed in it but it's a fresh new voice all by itself. That is the first phenomena. Samuel thought that it was Eli because it was within his experience. Why does he think that? It is because Eli would keep calling for him any way.

In the Midst of God's Will

The second area that we see here is that he heard an actual name being called, "Samuel, Samuel." He heard an actual voice speaking to him. And he ran to Eli. So apparently, he was in the position where he could hear quite discernibly. The second reason is this, *Samuel continually ministered before the Lord*. Now it's easier to discern God's voice when you are in the midst of doing the will of God. When in

John chapter 12 the voice sounded from heaven and said, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The rest of them said it thundered. But Jesus was hearing the perfect voice because He was in God's will. Some of His disciples possibly heard the voice too. Some others have some knowledge of angels and said angels spoke. How they interpreted the voice was based on their spiritual level and condition. So, we see here that Samuel was fully obedient to the level he was. No matter what your spiritual condition you don't have to be super spiritually and strong to hear all those things. A young Christian can hear the audible voice of God provided he or she is right where God wants him or her to be. Samuel was a little boy and he was faithful as far as he was concerned.

Response

The third area here is in verse 10 that is the fourth time the Lord came and called Samuel, Samuel. If you respond to the audible voice of God in some way, it will keep on speaking. Samuel did respond but he responded to the wrong person. Notice that voice didn't speak anything else. You remember the two stages of Elijah we mentioned in I Kg. 19 He heard a still small voice then he went out. Then only the voice starts speaking. So, he hears some sounds. He couldn't discern it yet. The audible voice of God when He speaks to us, there will be no revelation given until you acknowledge your recognition. In other words, it's like a phone ringing and you don't hear any thing until you pick up the phone. So, in the audible voice of God, you won't just suddenly get a message until you give a response.

Notice that Samuel has to say, "Speak Lord for thy servant hears." Then only the voice starts speaking to him. He demands a response. Let me tell you sometimes people have heard the audible voice of God and not discern it and they have missed the message. Of course, you don't respond to every sound. Remember all the spectacular things are confirmed by the inward witness. Anytime had God spoken in a spectacular way you will sense a bubbling in your in your spirit man. How did Elijah discern all the sounds in I Kg. 19? The winds were howling, the rocks were falling, the earth was quaking, the fires were burning, and a still small voice was sounding. How did he discern? Because there was on sound that created a response in his spiritual perception. You could discern the voice of God, the sound, with your spirit man. In the early hours of the morning when I was praying,

I heard a voice calling my name. I had to hear carefully two or three times before I realize that it was a voice calling me. It's only when I responded and say, "Yes Lord." Then He knows that He is recognized and then He starts speaking. We need to respond before we get the rest of the revelation.