
Text: numerous

Republic, February 23, 2025

Title: "Ways God Spoke in New Testament Days" Part 1

Introduction -

Today we will look at the first part of a 2 part series on the 7 ways God spoke in New Testament Days. The first 4 happened some in the New Testament, but we do not see them or hear about them happening, as often today. Those first 4 will be the focus of today's sermon. But, there will come a time in the future when God increases these first 4 to a level that will, more than likely, happen even more often than the New Testament days.

We will finish this message next Sunday.

Here is what God says will happen some day:

Acts 2:16-20 (NIV)

¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel*: (**Quoted from [Joel 2:28-32](#)*)

¹⁷ "**In the last days**, God says, **I will pour out my Spirit on all people**. (*sounds like a lot more often*) **Your sons & daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.**

¹⁸ Even on my servants, **both men and women**, **I will pour out my Spirit** in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

In the last days, we will see an increase of God's Spirit which will result in more of us, men AND women, getting revelation from God. It may be through Prophecy, seeing visions, dreaming dreams, or whatever. There will also be more miraculous events.

This is not saying SOME of this can't happen now. I believe it does some. But, those verses show that it will increase a lot more, some time in the future.

The first way God spoke in the New Testament, was actually not real often.

I. **Through an angel**

I have never experienced an angel appearing to me, nor do I personally know of someone who has.

In reading the bible we do know God used angels for the announcement of the birth of Jesus, to both Mary and Joseph. But, this wasn't the only times.

Let's look at 2 other incidents that involved angels.

A. To Philip [Acts 8:26-39](#)

Acts 8:26-27 a (NKJV)

²⁶ Now **an angel** of the Lord **spoke to Philip**, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert.

²⁷ **a** So he arose and went...

Notice the angel did not tell him why he was going there, nor what he was going

to encounter, and even what he was going to do.

Have you found that true in your own life - God leads you a certain direction and does not tell you why, or what you will encounter? All you know is "Go this direction."

Philip got told what to do, and he headed that direction.

Acts 8:27 b (NKJV)

²⁷**b** ...And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,

Bible Background Commentary

"Often only one attendant would accompany the official in a chariot; the wealthy eunuch may have more, but there is still room for Philip."

The man in the chariot has just left Jerusalem, having gone there to worship. In other words, he had interest in God.

Acts 8:28-30a (NKJV)

²⁸ (*he*) was returning. (*from Jerusalem*) And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

²⁹ **Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."**

³⁰**a** So **Philip ran to him**, and **heard him reading the prophet Isaiah**, ...

Bible Background Commentary says this about verses 28-30:

"those who could read nearly always read aloud. The situation here is obviously divinely arranged."

Even though the bible does not say, the way this is worded "overtake this chariot" (*and*) "Philip ran to him..." sounds like the chariot was moving. (probably slowly because he was able to read while moving) You wouldn't need to word this as "overtake the chariot" if the chariot was sitting still. The same way with the words "Philip ran to him" would be unnecessary words if the chariot was sitting still, not moving.

So, the angel got this whole thing started in heading Philip in the right direction. Then the Holy Spirit got involved in giving Philip specific direction once he reached the right area, by telling Philip to approach the man in the chariot.

Again, does the Holy Spirit tell Philip why he is going to the chariot?

The bible does not tell us how Philip got to that area. *Did he walk there, ride an animal to that area?* We do not know. All we know is Philip ran up to the chariot, so we could probably guess that he was on foot.

Acts 8:30b -34 (NKJV)

³⁰**b** ... and (*Philip*) said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come

up and sit with him.

- ³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this : "*He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. (out of [Isaiah 53](#))*"
- ³³ *In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth."*
- ³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?"

So, the eunuch just happened to be reading out loud about the Messiah, Jesus, when Philip arrived in that area. But the eunuch did not understand what it was talking about.

[Acts 8:35-39](#) (NKJV)

- ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, & beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.
- ³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. (*apparently the chariot continued to move*) And the eunuch said, "See, *here is water*. What hinders me from being baptized?" (*Philip must have talked to him about baptism*)
- ³⁷ Then Philip said, "**If you believe with all your heart**, you may." (*Don't take this lightly*) And he answered & said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
- ³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he (*speaking of Philip*) baptized him.
- ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; & he went on his way rejoicing.**

The bible never tells us why this eunuch was so important to God that an angel appears to tell Philip to go to that area, then has the Holy Spirit guide Philip to the Eunuch, and Philip ends up leading him to salvation, and even baptizing him.

What happened to the eunuch after salvation? You will have to ask in heaven.

This story is an example of the way early christians lived. They were guided by God. And, God could trust them to always be listening so that He could tell them things He wanted them to do.

How good are your listening skills? Do you live your life always listening for anything God wants to tell you to do?

What else is fascinating in this passage is that final verse, verse 39, where it says "The Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more..."

We do not know what that means. *Did he just disappear, being lifted up and taken elsewhere?*

But, what we do know is that the eunuch was now full of God because the bible says he "went on his way rejoicing."

This story is also interesting, because in [Isaiah 56:3-8](#) Isaiah talks about a eunuch being blessed by God and his name living on. So, a eunuch is reading in Isaiah chapter 53, & 3 chapters later Isaiah talks about a eunuch being a follower of God and being blessed by God.

I would love to know the rest of the story about what happened with this new christian eunuch after this encounter with Philip. *Did he go on to win many more people to God?*

Let's look at one more angel appearance in the New Testament:

B. With Peter

[Acts 12:5-11](#)

[Acts 12:5-6](#) (NKJV)

⁵ Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer (*key words here are "constant prayer"*) was offered to God for him by the church.

⁶ And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, **bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.**

The point is clearly made in verse 6 that it was impossible for Peter to escape the jail, barring some kind of miracle from God.

How often have you encountered what looks impossible, unless God does some kind of miracle? Have you ever prayed something like this "Father, I am asking you to do _____ such-n-such. I know it is impossible without you doing your miracles?"

[Acts 12:7-9](#) (NKJV)

⁷ Now behold, **an angel of the Lord stood by him**, and **a light shone in the prison**; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "**Arise quickly!**" And his chains fell off *his* hands. (*Was this said audibly, or said into Peter's thoughts?*)

⁸ Then the angel said to him, "**Gird yourself and tie on your sandals**"; & so he did. And he said to him, "**Put on your garment and follow me.**"

⁹ So he went out and followed him, & did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

Verse 7 reminds us that angels typically light up an area. They have just come from the presence of God.

We also see that the angel raised Peter up from some kind of sleeping position. His chains immediately fell off his hands.

At no time did the soldiers to the side of Peter, nor the guards, or anyone else in the jail notice the light from the angel, or even hear the angel speak. They never heard chains fall off of Peter, either.

It was also fascinating that Peter did not realize this was real. It seemed like a vision to him.

[Acts 12:10-11](#) (NKJV)

¹⁰ **When they were past the first and the second guard posts**, (*apparently walking right by the guards*) they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, & immediately the angel departed from him. (*God literally made Peter and the angel invisi-*

ble, opened the jail, opened the iron gate that leads to the city, etc)

- 11 **And when Peter had come to himself, (realizing it was all real) he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."**

Nowadays, we do not hear about a lot of angel appearances. But, they definitely had at least some angel appearances in the early church. But, rest assured, if we are still around in the end times, angel appearances may be one of those things we see more often.

The 2nd way we see God speaking to people in New Testament days was through:

II. Visions

A vision is like having a dream but you are awake. Sometimes you kind of freeze up as you see the vision. The NIV refers to it as a trance state.

I have never experienced this, but I had one woman in the first church I pastored at Camdenton that did experience it one time. She described to me what she experienced and it matched what the bible refers to as a vision. I wish I could tell you what she saw, but it has been too many years ago. What's fascinating is she was a fairly new christian.

Here is a bible example of a vision. I got to play Ananias in a play at Stained Glass Theatre:

Acts 9:10-16 (NKJV)

- 10 Now there was **a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision**, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."
11 So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.
12 **And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias** (*so, Paul had a vision too*) coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."
13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.
14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."
15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.
16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

So, both Ananias and Paul (Saul) had received visions about each other. Ananias expresses his worry about Paul, but God tells Ananias in the vision that he has selected Paul ("he is a chosen vessel of Mine") for His work.

Acts 10:17-20 (NKJV)

- 17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (*What a powerful statement! Gives me goosebumps*)
18 Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.
19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.
20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Here is one more example of a vision, but this one involved a vision AND an angel:

Acts 10:1-4 (NKJV)

- ¹ There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,
- ² a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, **who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.**
- ³ About the ninth hour of the day **he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"**
- ⁴ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

Notice the kind of person God gave the vision to. He was a soldier, but he was also a devout man, who feared God. Not only that, he also put his money and prayers where his beliefs were. He lived it. This is **who** got picked for a special assignment.

Acts 10:5-8 (NKJV)

- ⁵ Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.
- ⁶ He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, (*a person who transforms animal skin into leather*) whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."
- ⁷ And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. (*3 people*)
- ⁸ So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The angel did not ask Cornelius, himself, to go. He had Cornelius to "send men."

Notice AGAIN, that the angel does not tell Cornelius why he is sending men to Joppa. All the angel tells Cornelius is Peter "will tell you what you must do."

Do you see how life with God works? Do you see it all happens one step at a time?
"Do this, and once you do it, I will show you what next."

Cornelius selects 2 people he trusted, along with 1 devout soldier who served Cornelius.

Acts 10:9-20 (NKJV)

- ⁹ The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.
- ¹⁰ Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, **he fell into a trance** (*see verse 19. It also refers to this as a vision*)
- ¹¹ and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.
- ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.
- ¹³ And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."
- ¹⁴ But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."
- ¹⁵ And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
- ¹⁶ This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

- ¹⁷ Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.
- ¹⁸ And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.
- ¹⁹ **While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him,** "Behold, three men are seeking you.
- ²⁰ **Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."**
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I want to ask you this question because it entered my mind this week. *When the bible says the Holy Spirit spoke does that have to be audible speaking? Is it possible some, if not quite a few times, it was words that clearly came into our mind?* The bible does not say clearly HOW the Holy Spirit spoke, so we do not know for sure. All we know is He did speak in some way.

Notice that God also spoke to 2 people: Cornelius, then Peter. They both heard from God in visions. God was working on both ends of this event, the same way He was working on both ends with Ananias and Paul.

Also notice in verse 19, the Holy Spirit took over from the vision to give Peter the rest of what God wanted.

This entire event turned into God reaching out to the Gentiles for salvations.

Later, in [Acts 11:5](#) *Peter was talking about what he experienced & he called it a vision:*
[Acts 11:5](#) (NIV)

⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and **in a trance I saw a vision...**

The 3rd way that God spoke in the New Testament was by:

III. **Words of Prophecy**

A word of prophecy is usually God telling us something that is going to happen in the future.

I have never personally received one of these from God, nor have I had anyone give me a word of prophecy about something in my life.

These men that came had the gift of prophecy to the point they are called prophets:
[Acts 11:27-28](#) (NKJV)

²⁷ And in these days **prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.**

²⁸ Then **one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.**

We next see, in [Acts 13](#), the names of 5 people described as prophets and teachers:
[Acts 13:1-4](#) (NKJV)

¹ Now in the church that was at Antioch **there were certain prophets and teachers:**

Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger (*Nie-gur*), Lucius (*Lu-shus*) of Cyrene, Manaen (*Man-aye-in*), who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch (*tet-trark*) and Saul. (*5 prophets mentioned who were all at Antioch at that time*)

² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said**, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (*There were 5 prophets there. The bible doesn't tell us which ones the Holy Spirit said this to. All of them?*)

³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

The 4th way that God spoke to people in the New Testament was by:

IV. Dreams

I have received 2 of these that came true the very next day. When I first woke up from the 2 dreams that happened on 2 different occasions, the dreams seemed more real than a regular dream. They just felt different.

I won't read the verses in the New Testament about dreams that occurred to certain people. I will just mention where they are at. For some reason, there are only 4 mentioned, and all of them are only mentioned in the book of Matthew.

- Joseph, about Mary in [Matthew 1:20](#).
- Joseph, about the need to leave the country [Matt 2:13-14](#) because Herod wants to kill Jesus.
- Wise men in [Matthew 2:12](#)
- Pilate's wife in [Matthew 27](#)

Conclusion -

Today we have looked at the first 4 ways God spoke in New Testament days. Through:

- I. An Angel**
- II. A Vision**
- III. Words of Prophecy**
- IV. Dreams**

Next Sunday we will look at the last 3, which are more common for us to experience in our lives nowadays.

V. Careful Wisdom, & Careful Understanding of the situation, & sometimes with godly advisers

VI. Through men receiving "a filling of the Holy Spirit" for a particular moment or situation, resulting in speaking God's words, or doing something miraculous.

VII. Directly from the Holy Spirit

By Impressions we feel, audible words, words that come into our head, bible verses God leads us to.

