

How God communicates with us

- the Bible
 - What's the significance of calling the Bible the "Word of God"?
 - What does God say to us through scripture?
 - 2 Tim 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."
 - "God-breathed" (Gk, *theopneustos* — *theo*: God; *pneustos* adj. related to *pneuma*: breath, wind, spirit): (1) God-breathed, inspired; (2) the wisdom or dreams that come from God
 - What's the significance of calling scripture "God-breathed"?
 - What member of the Trinity normally interacts with man?
 - What do we acknowledge today as "all scripture"?
 - Matt 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."
 - 1 Ptr 1:25, "... the word of the Lord stands forever."
 - How relevant is God's word today and throughout eternity?
 - The primary way God intends to communicate with us is through the Bible
- other believers — those operating in gifts of the Spirit
 - 1 Co 12:7-11, ⁷ "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."
 - What does "for the common good" mean?

- 1 Co 14:3, “. . . everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.”
- Does this include directive prophecy — someone has a word from the Lord for you, directing you to do something?
- If a word of prophecy confirms a decision or something God told you to do, then it’s confirmation (strengthens, encourages, comforts you); however, it’s not directive
- 1 Co 14:26, “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”
- impression
 - definition: a vague thought, feeling, or image
- insight
 - definition: intuitive perception (not a rational conclusion) of the true nature of something that previously was hidden or not understood
 - a definite “Aha!” experience
 - Jn 16:13, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.”
 - Based on this scripture, what is one of the Holy Spirit’s primary functions?
- spirit peace
 - definition: conscious rest or assurance about something
 - spirit peace & peace of mind are not the same
 - Php 4:7 “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
 - “transcend” (Gk, *hyperecho*): (1) be superior in value, be better than; (2) surpass in greatness, exceed, rise above or beyond
 - “understanding” (Gk, *nous*): (1) mind, faculty of understanding, reasoning, & deciding; (2) way of thinking
 - Co 3:15 “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts”
 - “rule” (Gk, *brabeuo*): to act as an umpire, to arbitrate, to decide
- circumstances, or signs
 - caution: not fleeces

- We have spirit peace to guide & assure us, to rule as an umpire in decisions; we don't need "fleeces"
- Lk 1:18, "Zechariah asked the angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.'"
- Lk 2:12, "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."
- visions
 - Several levels, ranging from those you see as mental images (they seem internal) to "open" visions which are like watching a movie (they seem external)
- trances
 - A trance is like an open vision, except it's even more vivid and you actually participate in it
 - Peter's revelation from God about what is "unclean" occurred thru a trance (Acts 10 & 11)
- dreams
 - Dreams are a common form of communication, can have different levels of clarity and revelation
 - Most of our dreams are nothing more than random, meaningless impressions from our activities during the day
 - If you have only with a vague feeling that a dream might have been from God, it probably was not
- hearing God's voice
 - God can speak in an audible voice: you hear him physically, with your ears
 - God more frequently speaks with an internal voice; seems like a spontaneous thought
- angelic visitations
 - Heb 1:14, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"
 - Many times angels minister to us in the spiritual realm, we acknowledge it as from God, don't realize an angel was involved
 - Sometimes we see them in the physical realm, but they look like humans, so we don't realize they're angels; Heb 13:2
 - then there may be times when we see them and there's no doubt they're angels; Lk 2:9
 - Greek & Hebrew words translated "angel" in

Bible both mean “messenger”

- divine visitation (theophany)
 - God is physically present; typically it’s Jesus
- being caught up before the throne of God
 - not a vision or dream; rather, you’re literally caught up into God’s presence, either physically or spiritually; 2 Co 12:2-3

Ways God does not communicate with us

- finger-pointing
 - definition: open Bible at random, point to verse at random; trying to manipulate God into using this to speak to you
- promise cards
 - faced with a problem, pull out a promise card, expecting this random event to provide an answer or solution
- scouting
 - definition: asking several Christian friends for advice, then picking what sounds best
- ***Continued dependence*** on these practices will result in ***deception***
 - Jas 3:15 “Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.”
 - “unspiritual” (Gk: *psychikos*): belonging to the psyche, from the mind
 - 2 Co 11:14 “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

Closing

- recommended activity
 - at least twice a week, set aside 15 minutes to meditate on the ways God speaks to us
 - think about times in the past he may have spoken to you in those ways
 - don’t pray during that time, just meditate
 - be prepared to write down any significant spontaneous thoughts
 - I suggest you put the date on that paper & keep it