

# A Mighty Change of Heart (<http://mightychangeofheart.com>)

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"And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" Alma 5:14

## Chapter 16 – The Voice

### CHAPTER 16

#### THE VOICE

*“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth HEARETH MY VOICE. (John 18:37)*

How often have you heard this remark, “I wouldn’t recognize the Lord’s voice if He spoke to me.”? This may be referring to the direct method, for surely most of us have certainly heard the Lord’s voice indirectly. Concerning these two methods the Lord said:

*What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled whether by MINE OWN VOICE or the VOICE OF MY SERVANTS, it is the same.*

The two methods are clearly shown here. The Lord’s voice is the direct method. The voice of His servants is the indirect method. To hear the voice of the Lord by either method is a thrilling experience, but there are problems that may occur with both. In the first it is possible for Satan to whisper to our minds and deceive us. In other words, we may think that we are listening to the voice of the Lord when it is the other spirit that is giving the prompting.

Hearing the Lord’s voice through His servants presents another problem. It is possible for the servant, although we don’t like to admit it, to be wrong. Infallibility is not a doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In order for a person to qualify to be a servant, he must be acting and saying what the Lord would do or say. If he does not, he disqualifies himself in that particular instance as a servant of Christ and is acting on his own. Can a person be called a “servant” if he is going contrary to the will of Him whom he serves? What qualifies him to be a servant?

*And, behold, and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto the priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth –And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.*

*And whatsoever, they shall speak WHEN moved upon by the Holy Ghost*

*shall be scripture,*

*shall be the will of the Lord,*

*shall be the mind of the Lord,*

*shall be the word of the Lord,*

*shall be the VOICE of the Lord,*

*and the power of God unto salvation.*

*Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants. (D&C 68:2-5)*

Did you see the qualifying statement, “When MOVED upon by the Holy Ghost”? There are specific problems of which the Lord has warned His servants. Concerning those who have been called to be His servants the Lord warns:

*Behold, there are MANY called, but FEW are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the THINGS OF THIS WORLD, and ASPIRE TO The HONORS OF MEN, that they do not learn this one lesson – That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven CANNOT be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

*That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to*

*COVER OUR SINS,*

*or to GRATIFY OUR PRIDE,*

*our VAIN AMBITION,*

*or to EXERCISE CONTROL or DOMINION or COMPULSION upon the souls of the children of men,*

*in ANY DEGREE OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, behold,*

*the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and*

*WHEN it is withdrawn, AMEN to the PRIESTHOOD or the AUTHORITY of that man. (D&C 121:34-37)*

**This is one of the most solemn warnings that has ever been issued to the Priesthood.** It may appear that the above transgressions are just minor ones. Certainly they are not of the nature that would cause a person to become disconnected or separated from the church through being disfellowshipped or excommunicated. Why are the sins serious? Because, if continued, they can cause us to forfeit our right to the Spirit of the Lord. And if the Spirit of the Lord departs from us can we still be called servants? How can we declare the voice of the Lord when moved upon by the Holy Ghost when the Spirit has withdrawn from us or if we have never received the Holy Ghost in the first place? If we, in responsible positions, are guilty of any of the above transgressions, perhaps we should take a good look at ourselves for,

*Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm shall or hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts SHALL BE GIVEN by the POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST. (II Nephi 28:31)*

It is one thing to find ourselves under a curse because we trust in false teachers outside of the church, but it is really sad to be under a curse because we trust in teachers inside of the church who knowingly or unknowingly teach false doctrine — but how can we tell? That is the difficult part. If we are not in tune with the

Spirit of the Lord ourselves, we can't. There is no way that we can escape that individual responsibility. The burden is on our own shoulders. It cannot be lifted. If we are to discern between truth and error ourselves, we must have access to the Spirit ourselves. The very same things which cause priesthood leaders to lose the Spirit will also cause us to lose the Spirit. If leader and follower both lose the Spirit, God will permit strong delusions that they might believe a lie and be damned. (II Thess 2:11, 12) Isaiah said it this way:

*I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake they did not HEAR: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (Isaiah 66:4)*

## DIRECTLY

Now that we have discussed hearing the VOICE of the Lord indirectly let us now turn our attention to the direct method. When a person preaches the gospel under the direction of the Spirit, his hearers receive the message indirectly. The speaker receives the message directly from the Holy Ghost. To receive the message directly is one of the greatest things that can happen to a person. To illustrate:

A young missionary was deep in the Ozarks on a sabbath day. He had to speak in a three family sacrament meeting that afternoon. He spent the early afternoon in preparation. He sought the Lord in earnest prayer asking for inspiration in delivering what he had prepared, but when he started talking the Spirit of the Lord took over. The subject that he preached wasn't remotely connected with the one which he had prepared. Both the small congregation and the elder heard that message for the very first time. The voice of the Lord came directly to the elder and indirectly to the small congregation.

## THE PRISON CONVERSION

This case is almost unique. We don't hear of many conversions taking place behind prison doors. The time is approximately 30 BC. Eight thousand Lamanites have been baptized unto repentance in the land of Zarahemla. Nephi and Lehi leave Zarahemla to go to the land of Nephi. On the way they are captured by a Lamanite army and cast into prison. The VOICE of the Lord could have given them warning but it appears they had a mission to perform inside the jail.

*And after they had been cast into prison many days without food, behold, they went forth into the prison to take them that they might slay them. (Hel 5:22)*

How many days they fasted we don't know. However, they apparently started involuntarily. Do you suppose, that after surveying their difficult situation, they fasted voluntarily? Next we find,

*And it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi were encircled about as if by fire, even insomuch that they durst not lay their hands upon them for fear lest they should be burned. Nevertheless, Nephi and Lehi were not burned; and they were as standing in the midst of fire and were not burned.*

*And when they saw that they were encircled about with a pillar of fire, and that it burned them not, their hearts did take courage. (Hel 5:23,24)*

This had a profound effect on the Lamanite guards. They were filled with fear and amazement. Nephi and Lehi attempted to quiet their fears and testified that it was the power of God that was keeping the Lamanites from slaying them. Then it appears that a slight tremor took place. The walls of the prison shook but did not fall. A cloud of darkness overshadowed them and then they really became frightened. At this point a VOICE spoke directly to them. It is written as follows:

*And it came to pass that there came a VOICE as if it were above the cloud of darkness, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, and seek no more to destroy my servants whom I have sent unto you to declare good tiding.*

*And it came to pass when they heard this VOICE, and beheld that it was not a VOICE of thunder, neither was it a VOICE of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still VOICE of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul —*

*And behold the VOICE came again, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; and seek no more to destroy my servants. And it came to pass that the earth shook again, and the walls trembled. (Hel 5:29,30,32)*

Did you notice how the voice of the Lord came directly to the Lamanite guards calling them to repentance? It appears that when a corrupt government is in control that it is often the righteous who end up in prison and when a righteous government is in control, for the most part, the wicked are incarcerated. When criminals run a country the righteous are imprisoned.

These Lamanites, as you can see, were a captive audience. They were frozen with fear and they couldn't see because of the cloud of darkness. An apostate Nephite by the name of Aminadab was given power to look through the darkness. He saw Nephi and Lehi looking toward some being while encircled with fire. The whole group was then given power to see what Aminadab had described. Then they asked a very important question. How do we get rid of the darkness.

*And Aminadab said unto them: You must repent, and cry unto the VOICE, even until you shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you.*

*And it came to pass that they all did begin to cry unto the VOICE of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed...*

*And behold, the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words.*

*And it came to pass that there came a VOICE unto them, yea, a pleasant VOICE, as if it were a whisper saying:*

*Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world. (Hel 5:41,42,45-47)*

They were all encircled by fire and angels came down and ministered to them. It appears that both those who were in jail and those who were not experienced the glorious event and did you notice how many times the voice of the Lord spoke to them directly?

## SATAN'S VOICE

Now it is interesting to note that we can also listen to Satan's voice directly or indirectly. He can speak directly to us or he can speak to us by the voice of his servants. The Lord is not pleased with us when we listen to the voice of Satan directly or indirectly. Cain lost his opportunity to gain eternal life by listening to the voice of Satan directly,

*And Cain loved Satan more than God. And Satan commanded him, saying: Make an offering unto the Lord.*

*And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. (Moses 5:19,20)*

Do you begin to see why the offering was not accepted? Cain obeyed the voice of Satan. It was Satan who commanded Cain to make offering to the the Lord. Abel made his offering at the command of God. His sacrifice was accepted. This filled Cain with wrath. His countenance fell.

*And the Lord said unto Cain: Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen?*

*If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door, and Satan desireth to have thee; and except thou shalt hearken unto MY COMMANDMENTS, I will deliver thee up....*

*And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel, his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord. (Moses 5:22,23,26)*

At this point Cain became so jealous of his brother that he was no longer ready to listen to the voice of the Lord directly or indirectly, through his brother. Anger, hate, and revenge consumed him as he began to plot the death of Abel.

The Lord is not pleased with us when we seek to solve our problems by leaving Him out of the picture. That is exactly what the people were doing in the days of Enoch.

*And he heard a voice from heaven, saying: Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them — Repent, for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them; for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off;*

*And for these many generations, ever since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and HAVE DENIED ME, and have SOUGHT THEIR OWN COUNSELS in the dark. (Moses 6:27,28)*

*And Enoch continued his speech, saying: The Lord which spake with me, the same is the God of Heaven, and he is my God, and your God, and ye are my brethren, and WHY COUNSEL ye yourselves, and DENY the God of heaven? (Moses 6:43)*

Is it any wonder that the Lord was so unhappy with them. They were getting their counsel directly and indirectly from the father of lies. It is much easier to get counsel from a person than from God. It requires faith and repentance to get counsel from God, along with much prayer and fasting. The people in the days of Enoch were not willing to pay the price. Because of this He promised that He had prepared them a death and a hell if they did not repent. (Moses 6:29)

Are we any different today? When we have a problem to whom do we go? In the world today there are so many professional people around that we usually go to our Heavenly Father last. We go to doctors, lawyers, teachers, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, clergymen and a host of others before we go to our Heavenly Father. We deny the God of heaven just as Enoch's people did. How often we seek counsel from completely alien sources because we are either afraid of what our Heavenly Father would say, or we have not the faith that He would answer. Remember what the Lord has said:

*Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, SAVE THEIR PRECEPTS SHALL BE GIVEN BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST. (II Nephi 28:31)*

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that,

*The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that MAN SHOULD NOT COUNSEL HIS FELLOW MAN, Neither TRUST in the arm of flesh – But that EVERY MAN MIGHT SPEAK in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world. (D&C 1:19,20)*

What would the Lord have us do? It is very simple. First we must,

RESPECT AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES (the voice of the Lord indirectly to us);

RESPECT THE LORD'S SERVANTS (same as above); and

DEVELOP THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST (that we may hear the Lord's VOICE DIRECTLY).

When a baby is born into the world it is very important that the parents talk to the child. Through hearing the voice of the parents and others the child learns to speak. He also learns to take instructions from his parents. It is no different with our heavenly parents. They have to communicate with us and we with them if we are to come to know them. Eternal life is based on knowing God. The Lord said:

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent. (John 17:3)*

When communication has been established with our Heavenly Father, after a period of time, we actually come to know Him. Nephi implies that this happens when we are baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost.

*But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying: After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not KNOWN me. (II Nephi 31:14)*

After the baptism of fire in which a person hears the voice of the Lord directly, he may still choose not to obey the Lord and go his own way. But he will have to suffer the consequences. It is one thing to hear the voice of the Lord and quite another to hearken or obey.

*And the Spirit giveth light to EVERY MAN that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that HEARKENETH to the VOICE of the Spirit. (D&C 84.46)*

If we choose not to hearken to the Voice of God, the time comes when the Spirit withdraws from us.

*And whoso receiveth not MY VOICE is not acquainted with MY VOICE, and is not of me.*

*And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now. (D&C 84:52,53)*

Apparently there are many in the world who have heard His voice and not obeyed. **Where do you stand? Have you heard His voice directly?**

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