

"Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening."

by Hendrik Joubert

As a child the calling of Samuel made an impression upon me, directly as a result of the vivid manner in which my religious instruction teacher in public school (South Africa) presented the incident. He impressed upon me the idea that I need to be ready when God calls me, as He did Samuel. It was an awesome prospect, hearing God call *my* name. For days I waited, ready with my reply: *Spreek, Here, want U kneg hoor*. The call never came the way it did for Samuel, or for Abraham, or the twelve disciples.

Many still expect that call. Some claim to have been called in such a direct way to be messengers for God. You grant the possibility – then you notice that the *called* are preaching and teaching conflicting doctrines and ideas. Now you have to decide between them being misguided, or that the God whose Son prayed ... ***that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You,...*** (John 17:21) sends men with conflicting messages?

In essence they are the same? If the message is conveyed through *humble servants* why do they fail to live up to the following exhortation by a recognized messenger of God?: ***Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.*** (1 Corinthians 1:10) You begin to notice warnings against false teachers, preachers, apostles and even Christs, and find such in 26 of the 27 books of the New Testament. How may we know that we are listening to God and not to the many false teachers we are warned against?

When I read **Hebrews 1:1-2** I realized why we are not called as Samuel was: ***God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...*** God used different ways to communicate and chose to deliver His final message of salvation through His Son. It is aptly referred to as *the gospel of His Son*. (**Romans 1:9**) The question remains how He speaks to us specifically?

During His time on earth the Lord Jesus chose twelve individuals to be eyewitnesses of His resurrection, and to preach the gospel to all nations. (**Luke 6:13-13, Acts 1:16-22**) Eleven remained after the death of Judas Iscariot, and received the instruction to preach the gospel: ***Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves ...¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*** (Mark 16:14-15) One was chosen to replace Judas (**Acts 1:15-26**) and an opponent was converted by the Lord, who refers to himself as one untimely born. (**1 Corinthians 15:8**) They proclaimed the gospel speaking in the tongues of the people, (**Acts 2:11**) something modern day messengers are not able to do. These men had the ability to bestow the Spirit upon others through the laying on of their hands, enabling them to be part of the revelation of the New Testament. (**Acts 8:18; Ephesians 3:4-7**)

John supplies us with specifics as to how these men were equipped for this awesome task. Jesus said to them: "**These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.**"²⁶ "**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.** (John 14:25-26) "**I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.**"¹³ "**But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.** (John 16:12-13) Just as in the case of Samuel, it is obvious who this promise applied to. Many use this passage in an attempt to legitimize their conflicting doctrines; however the Lord did not speak to them and did not promise to send the Spirit to remind them of what He had said.

Jude (3-4) warns Christians ***to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints***, warning that some will sneak in to change it. Through Peter we learn that the writings of the apostle Paul are considered equal to ***the rest Scriptures***, warning that some ***distort*** these ***to their own destruction.*** (2 Peter 3:15-16) The apostle Paul explains that ***when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,***⁵ ***which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.*** (Ephesians 3:4-5) To Timothy he writes: ***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;***¹⁷ ***so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*** (2 Timothy 3:16-4:4)

He then issues another warning against those who change the gospel to suit men and it is here we find the reason why so many speak different and contradicting things: ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,***⁴ ***and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*** (2 Timothy 4:2-4)

The Bible is the only true and objective source of communication from God. It will ***teach*** and instruct us concerning ***righteousness*** as it ***rebukes*** and ***reproves*** us for our sins and false ideas so we ***may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*** Some choose to work on the message instead of having the attitude: ***Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.***