

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #1) Creation

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #2) Wisdom

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #3) Your Conscience

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #4) Other People

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #5) The Word of God

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #6) The Inner Voice of the Holy Spirit

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #7) The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #8) Dreams

Twelve Ways God Speaks: #9) Visions

- God Promises He Will Speak Through Visions
 - Joel 2:28-29 – 28 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
 - “visions” = from the root word meaning “to see”... Sometimes translated “revelation” or “dream”
 - Jeremiah 33:3 [NKJV] – Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.
 - Hosea 12:10 – I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them...
 - Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “behold the glory of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- Visions Happen Often in the Bible
 - God appeared to Abraham in a vision when He established His covenant (Genesis 15)
 - Isaiah was commissioned as a prophet when he had a vision of God
 - Isaiah 6:1 – ...I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.
 - Jeremiah, too, was commissioned through a vision – God reached out his hand, touched his mouth, and put His words in him (Jeremiah 1:9)
 - Ezekiel had some pretty dramatic visions
 - Like Jeremiah and Isaiah, his calling came as a result of a vision
 - He wrote, “the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God...” (Ezekiel 1:1)
 - Then “I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north – an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light...” (Ezekiel 1:4)
 - Later (Ezekiel 37), God shows him a vision of a valley filled with dry bones and tells him to prophesy to them and they come to life, a symbol of what God will do to Israel
 - In Ezekiel 40-48, he has an extended vision where God takes him from where he was in Babylon and brings him to Israel, showing him the Temple and the land, restored and full of God's glory
 - Ezekiel 8:1-4 – 1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign Lord came on me there. 2 I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what

appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. 3 He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. 4 And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel...

- Daniel 10:4-9 – 4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, 5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.
 - 7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8 So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. 9 Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.
- God spoke to Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk all through visions (Amos 1:1, Obadiah 1:1, Micah 1:1, Nahum 1:1, Habakkuk 2:1)
- The book of Zechariah is filled with visions God gave him (Zechariah 1:8-21, 2, 4)...
- NT Zechariah (John the Baptist's dad), the women who went to the tomb, and Cornelius all had visions of angels (Luke 1, Luke 24:23, Acts 10:1-6)
- While Peter was on the rooftop praying, he had a vision of a sheet being lowered, full of all sorts of clean and unclean animals (Acts 10)
- Paul had a vision of the risen Jesus on his way to Damascus and then gave his life to Him (Acts 9). Then he had a vision of Ananias praying for him (Acts 9:12). He had a vision in the Temple and God told him to escape because his life was in danger (Acts 22:17). Much later, God spoke through either visions or dreams to tell him to go to Macedonia and then to stay in Corinth (Acts 16, Acts 18). And at some point God took him to heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2-3).
- Almost the entire book of Revelation is one long vision John the Apostle received while exiled on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:11)
- Jesus Himself told some of His critics, "I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence..." (John 8:38)
 - He told others, "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing... For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does" (John 5:19-20)
- Our Spiritual Senses
 - We have physical senses so we can interact with the physical world
 - Touch, Taste, Smell, Hear, See
 - We also have spiritual senses to interact with the spiritual world
 - Touch
 - You can "feel" something in your spirit (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 1 Corinthians 7:36), God can "touch" your heart (1 Samuel 10:26)
 - Taste
 - Both Peter and David talk of "tasting" that God is good (Psalm 34:8, 1 Peter 2:3)
 - Psalm 119:103 declares, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"
 - Hebrews 6:4-5 talks about "those who have tasted the heavenly gift... who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age"
 - In the spirit, Both Ezekiel and John the Apostle were told to eat scrolls full of God's words and they tasted like honey (Ezekiel 3, Revelation 10)
 - Smell
 - Paul says that we are the aroma (the smell) of Christ and that we spread his aroma everywhere (2 Corinthians 2:14-15)

- Some have had experiences smelling the presence of demons... or of Jesus and angels
 - Hearing
 - Jesus talked about those who “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.” (Matthew 13:13)
 - Inner Monologue
 - When you hear your own voice in your head, that’s your spiritual ears
 - Many times, the OT prophets say, “In such and such a year, the word of the Lord came to me” – They are hearing with their spiritual ears
 - Sight
 - Paul prayed that the “eyes of our heart” would be enlightened (Ephesians 1:18)
 - That’s seeing in the spirit, receiving a vision
 - Using your imagination to picture something is using the eyes of your heart, your spiritual sight
 - You can take that ability, that spiritual sense of sight, and submit it to God, asking Him to show you things instead of you just imagining things
 - Hebrews 5:14 [NASB] – But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil.
- Prophets and Seers
 - The OT talks about both Prophets and Seers
 - There is not as much a distinction between the two as we might like there to be
 - Both seers and prophets have visions (Isaiah 29:10, 30:10), both hear messages from God (2 Samuel 24:11), both communicate messages from God (2 Chronicles 33:18), and seers prophesy just like prophets (Amos 7:12)
 - 2 Samuel 24:11 calls Gad “Gad the prophet, David’s seer”
 - Samuel, too, is called both a prophet and a seer in various places
 - 1 Samuel 9:9 – Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God, they would say, “Come, let us go to the seer,” because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.
 - It’s basically just 2 different words for the same person
- Three Types of Visions
 - Closed Visions
 - This is what most of us mean when we say that God gave us a vision
 - Your eyes are closed and He shows you something in your mind, your imagination
 - Many of the visions in the Bible seem like closed visions
 - Habakkuk’s vision of judgment coming on Israel and, later, Babylon seems like it was probably a closed vision
 - Paul’s vision of the man from Macedonia or when God encouraged him to keep preaching in Corinth could have been closed visions
 - Open Visions
 - Your eyes are open and God shows you something in the midst of the physical world around you
 - Ezekiel’s vision where he saw storms and lightning and wild, crazy creatures seem to be an open vision (Ezekiel 1)
 - Daniel’s vision in Daniel 10 with the man of fire and lightning seems to be an open vision that took place in the midst of the physical world next to the river
 - Abraham’s vision of God making a covenant with him seems to be an open vision (Genesis 15)
 - Trances
 - You’re here physically, but somewhere else mentally / spiritually
 - “trance” = *ekstasis* = our word “ecstasy”... ek + histemi = lit. to stand beside yourself / to be displaced

- Sometimes, it just means to be amazed, shocked, bewildered... beside yourself... something just blew your mind
 - There's this idea of a displacement of mind. Your body is here, but your mind is elsewhere
- You might be having a prayer meeting with the elders of Israel and then suddenly the Holy Spirit is picking you up by your hair and you're in the Temple, like Ezekiel (Ezekiel 8)
- When Peter was praying on the rooftop and God lowered the sheet of animals, it says he was in a trance (Acts 10-11)
- When Paul was in the Temple praying and God told him to get out of Jerusalem, it was a trance (Acts 22:17)
 - It's also possible he was in a trance when he was "caught up to the third heaven" and "caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things" (2 Corinthians 12:2-3)
- How Can You Receive Visions?
 - You can't force God to give you a vision, you can't make it up by using your imagination, but you can position yourself to be more ready to receive
 - Habakkuk 2:1-2 – 1 I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. 2 Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it...."
 - 1) Stand
 - Habakkuk stood at his guard-post along the wall, away from everyone else
 - You will be more available to receive a vision from God if you get alone where it's quiet and free from distractions
 - 2) Look
 - Habakkuk said he would "look to see what [God] will say"
 - Close your eyes and intentionally turn the eyes of your heart toward Jesus
 - Picture Him on the throne surrounded by the 24 elders and the creatures and the thousands upon thousands in Heaven worshiping Him
 - Picture Him in a scene from the Bible
 - Picture Him sitting next to you wherever you are
 - As you picture Him, allow Him to direct the scene that plays out in your mind
 - 3) Write
 - God told Habakkuk to "Write down the revelation"
 - Write down what you see and hear
 - This will make it easier to judge whether what you heard was from God or not, easier to remember details of what you saw, and easier to follow through on what He showed you