

How do we, today, learn God's will? How do we develop faith? The answer is given in Romans 10:17: "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*".

Yet many religious people today claim that God speaks directly to them, giving them new revelations, words that were not written in the New Testament. Are their claims true? Does the Holy Spirit talk to people individually during this time? Does He give one instruction to one man and different instructions to another, both of which contradict clear statements in the New Testament? When religious leaders claim to be speaking by inspiration, and the message of their "gospel" conflicts with what has already been laid down, written and confirmed as law in God's revealed word, can these men be speaking the truth?

God warns through the apostle Paul, "*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed*" (Galatians 1:8).

"We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they

were moved by the Holy Spirit. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you..." (2 Peter 1:19-21;2:1).

The closing words of the Scriptures, Revelation 22:18,19, warn that nothing is to be **added to** or **taken from** what has been revealed. God's message for mankind is complete. Those who claim to speak new words from Him today are speaking the words of their own imagination. They are deceived and they deceive those who believe them. If you want to know what God has said, go to the Bible and let Him speak to you through those inspired pages.

"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

The churches of Christ salute you"
(Romans 16:16).

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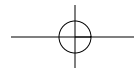
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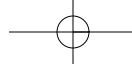
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Does God Speak Directly To Us Today?

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Christ prepared His apostles to carry on His work when He returned to God in heaven. But they were only human, and He knew it would be impossible for them to remember all that He had said to them. In human error, they might have even taught false doctrines. To prevent such tragic and eternal problems, Jesus promised to send the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, to lead the apostles into all truth. He said, *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (John 14:26). Again, He said, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come”* (John 16:13).

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles were gathered in Jerusalem, as Jesus had instructed them, when suddenly the Holy Spirit was poured out on them from God. Being baptized with the Spirit, as had been promised, they were now

able to miraculously speak in the languages of those who were gathered to hear them (Acts 2:4-8). They were also able to heal the sick, raise the dead, and to speak the truths of God by the direction of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised. Through that power, they wrote the books of the New Testament, without human error and without contradiction.

Now, what were the reasons for these miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit?

- ✿ Jesus had returned to heaven and was not there to guide the apostles.
- ✿ The church was begun with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and divine guidance was needed to ensure that all practices and teachings with regard to the church be without human error.
- ✿ As the apostles and their converts moved about the world, preaching the good news of salvation, they proved themselves to be of God by the miracles they were able to perform.
- ✿ The New Testament Scriptures had not yet been written. It was through the Holy Spirit that this was done, as the apostles penned the “God-breathed” words.
- ✿ The New Testament was confirmed to be the word of God by the miraculous signs done by the writers (Mark 16:20).

✿ During this infant stage of the church, before the Scriptures had been completed, there was a critical need for inspired guidance in the various congregations as they were scattered throughout the world. By prayer and the laying on of the **apostles’ hands** (Acts 8:14-18), individual miraculous gifts were given to Christians, to enable them to provide the correct leadership (1 Corinthians 12:4-31). There is no record anywhere in the New Testament which shows that anyone other than the apostles could give these miraculous gifts; therefore, when the apostles died, and those people died to whom they had given gifts, the miraculous age ceased. The reason for this was not that God would be limiting Himself, but that the Scriptures were then complete. His written word was then to be the guide for all men, for all time.

Regarding the completeness of God’s revealed message in the New Testament, we read, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

