



AND he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? ¹⁰ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹ And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? ¹⁴ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (1 Kings 19:9-14)

Noticing the voice of a small bird in the wee hours of the morning may require sound hearing; but the roar of a lion in the nearby bush country not so much. It is not simply the volume of either that makes them detectable, but also the import to us of the voice. The roar of the lion represents a powerful enemy, the voice of the bird only a small sound of nature.

The Lord our God speaks with both the voice of the lion as well as the lowly whisper of the bird. But if we are without the gift of hearing, we would never recognize either. We need physical ears to hear the voice of the natural Creation, and we need spiritual ears to hear that Voice of God calling. He sometimes calls in the cool of the evening as at Eden, or thunders from the heights of Sinai in the Wilderness. Let us compare the two extremes of tenderness and of fearful thunderings.

You will recall the lad, Samuel, whom his mother dedicated to the service of the Lord in answer to prayer. While still a mere child, the Lord spoke unto Samuel thusly:

¹ And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of

the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. ² And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; ³ And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; ⁴ That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. ⁵ And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. ⁶ And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. ⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. ⁹ Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (1 Samuel 3:1-9) The Lord was graciously tender in speaking to Samuel. Interestingly, the spiritual ears of the old prophet Eli was not pure enough to hear that voice, but Samuel did have the innocence to hear the Lord. At that time, the Lord spoke in tones very much like another man such as Eli. But He sometimes speaks very, very softly.

There was a time when Elijah was disheartened by the lack of faith of Israel. He was secluded in a cave when he had an encounter with that almost whispering Voice of the Lord: ¹⁰ And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹ And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? (1 Kings 19:10-13)

He speaks to us as well in that still small Voice; but we will not likely hear it in quarreling with a neighbor, in a nightclub, or casino. We need to be in a place secluded from the trample of men's feet and the mundane cursing's of the crowd. The conscience speaks in tones that only the owner can hear and understand.

There are other times when the circumstances merit a more commanding Voice. When the Children of Israel were gathered about the base of Mount Sinai, they were yet restless and doubting. They did not place all trust in the Lord who had miraculously parted the sea and destroyed the pursuing Egyptian army therein. It might be said that these people did not fully fear God. As they gathered about Sinai for Moses to receive the Law, they perhaps murmured yet. But God would strike fear in their hearts – for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: ¹⁸ And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰ And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹ And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:18-21)

There can be no better counsel than that given by the Lord our God. We would best be silent in hearing that counsel. Following our Good Shepherd and not acting as rebellious goats will always lead to health and healing. Of course, the contrary also

applies. Listen to God's counsel of the wilderness: ²⁶ *And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.* (Exodus 15:26) America and much of the world have turned a deaf ear of late to the Words and Voice of God. Healing requires righteousness!

The faithful minister of today is not the polished cleric fresh out of Oxford, or the Name-it-and-claim-it ministers of the modern churches. The modern minister places more trust in the precise Word of God than any speculations learned in seminary. In fact, the faithful minister of our day is no different than John the Baptist – *the Voice of one crying in the wilderness.* ³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* (Matthew 3:3) That Voice of the faithful servant of the Lord is not MANY Voices – but ONE Voice crying in the wilderness. If he is called of God, that voice is God's Voice speaking through His servant.

The Voice of the Lord wastes no words, but speaks in clarion and crystal clear terms. When that Voice called Lazarus from the tomb, its power was directed precisely to that cold, corrupting heart of Lazarus – and he heard and responded just as every sinner called in due time by the Voice of the Lord.

Your attention is invited to at least three other occasions when the Voice of the Lord was spoken in audible terms in the presence of men – this time in the New Testament: The first was at the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Trinity was powerfully present on that occasion. ¹⁶ *And Jesus (our Lord), when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God (Holy Ghost) descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, (God the Father) in whom I am well pleased.* (Matthew 3:16-17) Did you note the full presence of the Trinity here? The second time was on the Mt. of Transfiguration: ⁵ *And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. ⁶ For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. ⁷ And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. ⁸ And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.* (Mark 9:5-8) A third time was when our Lord rebuked Saul on the road to Damascus.

Have you heard that still small Voice whispered in grace, or will the Lord need to thunder at you from the heights of His Mountain of Laws in judgment?