

Quotes from the Word: Hearing the Lord

OLD TESTAMENT

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14).

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5).

"All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8).

"Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 12:28).

Then the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears" (1 Samuel 3:10).

"Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God" (Jeremiah 11:4).

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah 1:19).

"When I called, you did not answer. When I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight" (Isaiah 65:12).

"Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear that your soul may live (Isaiah 55:2-3).

Show me Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in the Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

(Psalm 25:4-5).

I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure (Psalm 119:162).

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

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NEW TESTAMENT

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 11:15).

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28).

“Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation. And the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:47-49).

He [Jesus] said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it” (see Luke 8:21).

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 17:5).

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

“The sheep hear His voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (see John 10:3,4).

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word” (John 14:23).

“Everyone that is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:37).

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (Revelation 3:20).

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:22).

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HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

THE WORD OF THE LORD

The Word is from the Lord, about the Lord, and is the Lord (*Apocalypse Revealed* 200).

It is through the Word that the Lord is present with a person and conjoined with him, for the Lord is the Word, and as it were speaks with the person in it (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 78).

The life that flows in from the Lord through the Word is the light of truth into our minds and the love of good into our will (see *De Verbo* 2).

No one...feels and perceives the Divine life in the Word but he who is in the spiritual affection of truth when he reads it, for he is in conjunction with the Lord through the Word (*Apocalypse Revealed* 200).

He leads those who love truths, and who will them from Himself. Such are enlightened when they read the Word; for the Lord is in the Word and speaks with everyone according to his understanding (*Apocalypse Explained* 1183).

When the Word is read, the Lord comes in and teaches (*Arcana Coelestia* 6516:3).

The Lord instructs everyone by means of the Word, and He instructs a person to the degree that the person receives goodness from the Lord in his will, which in turn depends on the degree to which he abstains from evils because they are sins (*De Verbo* 13:2).

Consider that Jehovah the Lord, who is the God of heaven and earth, spoke the Word through Moses and the prophets, and therefore it cannot be other than Divine truth, for what Jehovah the Lord Himself speaks must be such. Consider that the Lord the Savior, who is the same with Jehovah, spoke the Word in the Gospels, much of it by His own mouth, and the rest of it by the breath of His mouth, which is the Holy Spirit, through His twelve disciples; whence it is, as He says, that in His words there is spirit and there is life (see *True Christian Religion* 190).

The spiritual sense of the Word has been disclosed by the Lord through me [Swedenborg]; which has never before been revealed since the Word was written with the sons of Israel; and this sense is the very sanctuary of the Word; the Lord Himself is in this sense with His Divine, and in the natural sense with His Human. Not a single iota in this sense can be opened except by the Lord alone. This surpasses all the revelations that have hitherto been made since the creation of the world. Through this revelation a communication has been opened between people [on earth] and the angels of heaven, and the conjunction of the two worlds has been effected; because when a person is in the natural sense the angels are in the spiritual sense (*Invitation to the New Church* 44).

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HEARING AND OBEYING THE WORD OF THE LORD

“To hear His voice” [John 10:3] is to obey His commandments (*Arcana Coelestia* 9310:3).

“Having an ear to hear” means to perceive and obey, and also to attend (*Apocalypse Revealed* 590).

All who are in obedience are in heaven or come into heaven (*Apocalypse Explained* 443).

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”, means that he who understands should hearken to what Divine truth proceeding from the Lord teaches and says to those who are of His church (*Apocalypse Explained* 108).

The inner meaning of “hearing” is to obey. It also means to perceive as is plain from the function of the ear and the nature of the hearing. The function of the ear is to receive another’s speech—to transfer what anyone is speaking from his own thought into the thought of another, and from the thought into his will, and from the will into act. Hence “to hear” is to obey. “Hearing” anyone means to perceive and “listening” or “hearkening” to anyone means to obey. The circle of communications is effected from will into thought, and so into speech; and from speech through the ear into another’s thought and will (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5017).

“To hear” signifies perception from the will of good, and thence obedience, because speech enters the ear at the same time with the sound, and the truths uttered enter the understanding and thence the thought, while sounds enter the will and thence the affection. In the spiritual world sounds present and produce the affection which is of the will, and the words of the sound the thought which is of the understanding (*Apocalypse Explained* 588).

He who attends to the precepts of the Lord...means whoever is willing to know truths, and to investigate them from the Word; this no one can do who is in evils of life, and who has confirmed himself in falsities of doctrine. Those who confirm themselves in falsities of doctrine attend to nothing in the Word but what favors their false principles; other things they either pass by as if they were not seen, or they pervert and falsify them; whereas those who are in evils of life do not concern themselves about truths, and if they hear them still they do not hear them. Thus they receive with the one faculty of hearing, which is to see and perceive what they hear, but not with the other faculty, which is to hearken to or obey those things. But those who desire to know truths, and to investigate them from the Word, are those who are in the spiritual affection of truth, and who love truth because it is truth. And those alone are in that affection who desire to live according to truths from the Word, thus according to the precepts of Lord. These are they who are meant by, “If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (*Apocalypse Explained* 249:2).

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A person, like the earth, can produce nothing of good unless the knowledges of faith are first sown in him, whereby he may know what is to be believed and done. It is the office of the understanding to hear the Word, and of the will to do it. To hear the Word and not to do it, is like saying that we believe when we do not live according to our belief (*Arcana Coelestia* 44).

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL HEARING AND SEEING

Those things that enter by hearing are not only seen by the understanding, but are also obeyed, if they agree with a person's affection; for interior affection adjoins itself to things thus heard, but not to things merely seen (*Apocalypse Explained* 249).

"Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:16). Here, too, the "eyes" signify the understanding of truth and the belief in it; so "to see" signifies to understand and believe, and the "ears" signify obedience, thus a life according to the truths of faith, and "to hear" signifies to obey and live. For no one is blessed because he sees and hears, but because he understands, believes, obeys, and lives (*Apocalypse Explained* 1081:3).

"Hearing" in the interior sense means obedience and in the internal sense faith in the will. Sight in the interior sense means the understanding and in the internal sense faith in the understanding. The sense of hearing at the same time convinces a person that the thing is true, for it has an influence not only on the understanding part of a person's mind but also on the will part, and so reaches more interiorly. That is to say, it reaches the will and causes that person to will that which he sees. This is why 'hearing' means the understanding of a thing and at the same time obedience, and why in the spiritual sense it means faith in the will (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3869).

Hearing is given to people chiefly for the reception of wisdom and sight for the reception of intelligence. Wisdom is to perceive, to will, and to do. Intelligence is to know and to perceive (*Apocalypse Explained* 14:1,2).