

CONSCIENCE AS VOICE

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INTRODUCTION.

In what follows, I will substantiate the following conclusions:

1. It is not only possible for a Christian to speak to Jesus in prayer, but to hear Jesus' phonetic voice as He answers. That is, it is possible to carry on a conversation with Jesus, via the Holy Spirit.
2. This kind of 'hearing' is not from sound waves entering the ears, but is a mental process in the same part of the mind that supports the usual acoustic hearing.
3. The part of the mind that is involved is scripturally named the conscience. Biblically, the conscience supports both spiritual hearing and vision.
4. Disobeying and/or ignoring God's voice in the conscience damages its capabilities to see and hear.

5. There is a biblically prescribed method for reversing damage to the Christian's conscience. It is vitally connected with both the New Covenant and the Blood of Christ.

BACKGROUND.

In 1983, I had just come back to the Lord, after forty years in the 'wilderness of sin' [Ex. 16:1]. I was voraciously reading the Bible, and kept it on my bedside table to read a little bit, every night. I'll never forget the night I found the verses Jesus taught his disciples in the Galilee about His future rejection of some who thought they were doing good works in the Church. It's about those who would call Jesus "Lord" and profess to do good works, such as prophecy and deliverance. And, Jesus would say to them,

"... I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." [Mat. 7:23]

This verse alarmed me. How was it that some people who apparently thought they were Christian and were doing things like prophecy and deliverance would hear these words from Jesus, saying that He never knew them? What does it take for Jesus to know you?

It was a year later that I found the answer to the mystery of [Mat. 7:23]. It was where Jesus was being questioned in the Temple about whether or not He is the Christ that the Jews have been expecting so long. Jesus said that He had already told them and they had not believed. He told them that they were not his "sheep." He then said,

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ..." [John 10:27]

Here then, is how Jesus knows His sheep. They hear His voice and they follow Him. And the Greek is "... akous ema phone ...". It is an acoustic-type hearing of a phonetic voice. It's not just hearing His word (*logos*), which might be what's written in the Bible. It's just like hearing someone talking to you. It also means that for a Christian, hearing precedes following.

That verse out of John flooded me with relief. And, that's because I already knew that I was 'hearing' Jesus, phonetically. He had proved it to me, one night when I had thought that I was talking to myself. I won't go through the testimony, but the 'proof' was incontrovertible. I was actually hearing the voice of Jesus, talking to me. And, it was just like that little 'voice' in my head, when I talked to myself ... in English. Only, sometimes it was not me, but Him. (And, sometimes it was a third party. I'll deal with that at the end of this paper.)

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY.

The Bible is probably the original psychology textbook. That's because it says so much about man's mental and physical makeup in general, and the Christian's in particular. The English translation of the Bible, going back to the King James version, uses a number of words that deal with how a person thinks and acts. These are such words as "heart," "mind," "spirit," "soul," "understanding," "will," "works," and "body."

In preparing to research this paper, I remembered that I had done something similar, some fifteen years prior. Upon reviewing that previous work, I realized that it contained the answer to the present question. But, it was necessary to consider more than just the scriptures dealing with the conscience only, but also the heart, within

which the conscience is embedded. And that was because [Heb. 4:7] ties the hearing of Jesus to the condition of the heart. Jesus, Himself, made this tie-in [Mat. 13:15].

The previous work was a copyrighted 1992 book manuscript that remained unpublished, even though submitted to twelve main-line book publishers. The book was entitled, The Joshua Walk.¹ (References at end of paper.) It was about seventy biblical steps in the spiritual walk to Christian maturity. It was based on the physical walk of the ancient Israelites from bondage to liberty. Paul said that the Israelite physical walk was a pattern (type) for the Christian [1 Cor. 10:11].

Part-1 of Chapter 5 of The Joshua Walk dealt with the spiritual preparation of a Christian for ministry. It immediately dealt with the Christian as being the modern counterpart of the Ark of the Covenant. Only here, it is the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. The biblical simplicity of the New Covenant is that God promises to put His laws directly into the hearts and minds of them that are sanctified [Heb. 10:16], [Jer. 31:33]. And, scripturally, that is the totality of the New Covenant.

I have put an extract from Chapter 5 of the Joshua Walk in the Appendix of this paper with permission of its writer, which is me. Please read it for the scriptural details from which I am going to justify the conclusions, above. Minor editing has been done, to promote clarity. Some underlining has been done, toward the end of the quoted section, to point at the connection with the present paper.

HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY WORK?

I will now summarize the results of this scriptural examination of Christian psychology, using Figure-1, below. This is the original figure from Chapter-5 of The Joshua Walk, reproduced here. It makes visual the logical structure from the excerpt in the Appendix. It is how an engineer might view all of the various parts of the Christian, mental and physical, as detailed in the Bible. It is the sort of engineering diagram used to analyze the data flow and software control using a computer, embedded in a mechanical system (such as an automobile or airplane). It comprises both a structure and imbedded processes that flow through the structure. And, it's all scriptural.

Figure-1 shows the Soul, as the consciousness, imbedded in the physical Body. So also embedded is the Christian spirit and the Holy Spirit (in those who are saved). It is the Holy Spirit who renews (reconditions) the Christian spirit and breathes life into it. The Christian's own spirit produces the necessary emotion, purpose, and drive.

Embedded within the Soul are the Mind (or intellect) and Heart. Embedded within the Mind are the Will, Understanding, and Remembrance (memory). Embedded within the Heart are Reason and Conscience.

So much for the structure. Now, what are the processes? What is the flow?

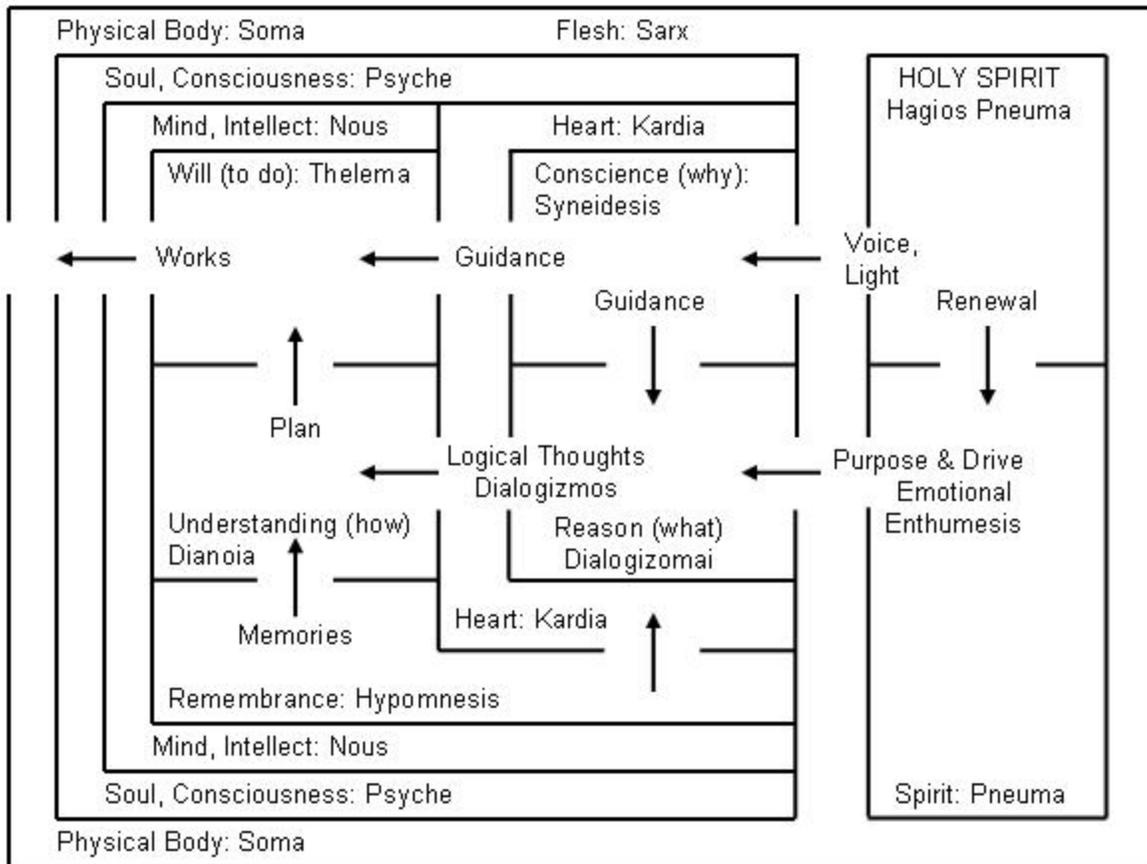


Figure-1. Flow Diagram of the Scriptural Body, Soul, and Spirit.

First of all, the Holy Spirit speaks (voice of Jesus) to the Conscience and provides the vision of what is to be done. Simultaneously, with ‘nudging’ from the Holy Spirit, the Christian’s spirit produces the Drive and Purpose for what is to be done. The Purpose may be more emotional than rational. It is passed to the Reason, where it crystallizes as an articulation of what is to be done. These Logical Thoughts are guided by the rules of the Conscience. They then flow into the Understanding and are fleshed out there with ‘how to’ memories, to form the Plan. The Plan then flows into the area of the Will, being again guided by the Conscience. The Plan is implemented in the Will and is transformed into Action, resulting in bodily Works.

In the same way that the Father spoke to Jesus [John12:50] and Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing [John 5:19], so Jesus speaks to the Christian and provides the necessary vision via the Holy Spirit.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Now, Figure-1, above, does not need to be taken as the bottom line. It is simply an engineer’s visual aid for the body of scriptures examined. The bottom line is that it is the Conscience in which the voice of Jesus is heard. And that is a phonetic voice, not some lesser definition of “voice.” This phonetic hearing, which takes place in the Conscience, is the voice of Jesus, as relayed by the Holy Spirit, who does not speak of Himself, but only what He hears [John 16:13]. If this relayed hearing is acted upon

(obedience), it forms the necessary guidance for Reason and Will, to do whatever good work the Lord has spoken about to the Christian, personally. If it is not acted upon, then the hearing may become dulled, as Jesus commented in [Mat. 13:15].

There is a caveat. To me, all small voices in my mind sound similar. My experience shows that one can come to recognize the Lord's manner of speaking, after repeated occurrences. After I became aware of it in 1983, the Lord brought to my mind remembrances of prior times He had spoken to me, going back even to my childhood, after I was baptized at the age of nine. Prior to 1983, all of the times the Lord was speaking to me, I thought it was me talking to myself. Only later did I realize that there were three possibilities for small voices in the mind.

Praying is one thing. That's one-way. Everybody can pray. But, talking with Jesus, conversationally, is controversial in Christianity. Personal experience of it is often taken figuratively, not literally. So, if there is a little voice in your head, do you have a mental condition, or is it Jesus? Or, is it just you? Or, is it a third party?

The Old Testament is full of instances of people conversing with God. That's what the old prophets did. The first reference to conversation with a "voice" is the "still small voice" of God that came to Elijah in the cave [1 Ki. 19:12]. And the Septuagint Greek (3 Ki.) for the "voice" was "phone." It was a phonetic voice. In the New Testament, prophecy was so commonplace that nobody made a big deal of it. But, because after 300 A.D. the institutional church brooked no opposition to its authority, consciences were fettered and prophecy disappeared, or at least went underground. (See the Appendix.)

In the New Testament, when Paul was discussing tongues, he said, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world (kosmos), and none of them is without signification." [1 Cor. 14:10]. Here, "voices" is again derived from the Greek, "phone." "Kinds" is "genos," which means different types. And, "without signification" is "aphonos," which is the exact opposite of "phone," thus meaning "not carrying speech in content." So, the case for phonetic voices as a means of spiritual communication is well established, biblically.

A THIRD PARTY IN YOUR HEAD.

Given the existence of a still small voice, is it necessarily Jesus, speaking? The biblical answer is "No." There are other spirits who speak. And, these are the so-called unclean spirits. These are also known as "devils," for which the Greek is "demon" [Mark 1:34]. In cases of demonic possession, these unclean spirits speak through those they possess [Mark 1:23-26]. There are instances less than outright possession, where the person is harassed (vexed) by an unclean spirit [Luke 6:18]. Spiritual "uncleanness" (defilement) is marked by what comes out of, rather than what goes in to a person [Mark 7:20].

Thus, there are three possibilities for voices in one's head. First, is you, yourself, speaking in your own mind. Second, is the Holy Spirit, relaying Jesus' words. Third is a demon, talking to you. I can testify that I became very familiar with the third, when I was going through thirty hours of deliverance ministry with Dr. Joe Allbright, in Houston¹.

¹ Liberating the Bruised, by Dr. Joe Allbright, Joe E. Allbright Evangelistic Assoc., Inc., 17014 Summer Dew Lane, Houston, TX 77095-1234, <http://www.liberating-the-bruised.com/>

One purpose of demonic spirits harassing Christians is to deceive and mislead [1 Tim. 4:1-2]. For this reason, Christians are cautioned to be careful about spiritual communication. We are not to believe just any spirit, but to test them, to see if they are of God [1 John 4:1-3]. And, that scripture gives the specific test that is to be applied. Spirits that fail the test are labeled as spirits of antichrist, or opponents of Jesus. I have had occasion to use this test.

The Bible also talks about “seducing spirits.” Following their entreaties can result in a loss of the hearing capability, with the conscience “seared,” as with a hot iron [1 Tim. 4:1-2]. Christians with such a condition have a way to get their consciences cleansed, via the blood of Christ [Heb. 9:14]. For Jesus’ blood is the blood of sprinkling, to cleanse the defiled [Heb. 10:22]. It is to be reminded of this that we take holy communion [1 Cor. 11:24-25]. Drinking the wine is a symbol of internalizing Jesus’ blood, which He said we must do in order to be indwelt by Him [John 6:53-66]. And, knowing that the wine symbolizes Jesus’ blood takes us back to the foot of the Cross, where we are sprinkled by the Blood that repairs our Conscience.

CONCLUSION.

Many Christians have absolutely no idea that Jesus can respond to their prayers in a phonetic voice. They think of prayer as one-way communication. Some Christians also think that when a murderer says, “*The devil made me do it,*” that is just the rantings of a disordered mind. But, such a statement may well be true. And, some Christians may well be giving heed to seducing spirits, leading to what I call “gratuitous good works” that are not in God’s will. Such might explain Jesus’ teaching about “workers of iniquity” in [Mat. 7:23].

During the Great Tribulation period (3.5 years), it’s going to be imperative that effective Christians have conversational communications with Jesus. Because those times are going to be as bad as it gets. As Jesus said, “... *except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.*” [Mat. 24:22]. Those days shall be shortened for Christians, but not eliminated.

It is to aid my brothers and sisters in Christ that this paper has been written.

APPENDIX

1. The Voice of Conscience.

“It was late in the thirteenth century that the psychology of Conscience was closely studied for the first time, and men began to speak of it as the audible voice of God, ...”

So said Lord Acton in his Lectures on Modern History (1895), published in 1906.² Acton was interested in this, not from the standpoint of theology, but in his examination of the effect upon the development of modern European government of a conscience freed from the strictures of the Roman Catholic Church. That is, he was interested in what he called “the liberty of conscience.”

“It is customary to call the conscience the voice of God in man.”

So wrote Archpriest Alexander Mileant of the Russian Orthodox Church.³ He characterized “... this inner voice, called the conscience, ..” as being located outside a man’s control and expressing itself independently, quite apart from a man’s desire. Mileant stated that psychology is concerned with the study of the nature of conscience and its relation to man’s other moral capabilities. He examined the relationship between man’s conscience, mind, will, and heart. All of these are terms used in the Bible.

The term, “Psychology of Conscience,” is the description of an area of study in modern Psychology. References are easily found in the literature.^{4,5}

It seems that it has long been held in western (Christian) civilization that the conscience is the seat of “the voice of God.” And, that not just in theology, but in history and psychology.

2. Biblical Christian Psychology – Extract From The Joshua Walk¹.

“Your physical body is made up of flesh, and it contains your spirit and your soul. The soul is that part which contains consciousness, and it is associated with the part of the body known as the brain. This consciousness is not necessarily high level. Even animals have it. So, it can be said that even an animal has a soul. With man, however, there is a more refined consciousness, which is called the intellect, or mind. In the Bible, this is referred to by the Greek word, “*nous*.” And, it is within this mind that intellectual activity takes place. The Bible says that the spirit and soul are separate entities [Heb. 4:12]

So, let's explore their makeup, separately.

The Spirit.

The spirit is capable of perception [Mar. 2:8] and of receiving witness [Rom. 8:16]. It reacts and may be activated [Acts 17:16]. It can sigh [Mark 8:12], groan [John 11:33], be troubled [John 13:21], feel compulsion [Acts 18:5], and become emotionally “hot” [Acts 18:25]. The spirit can purpose [Acts 19:21] and speak [1 Cor. 14:2]. It can affect the will [Mat. 26:41] and enliven the flesh [John 6:63]. The spirit worships [John 4:23], prays [1 Cor. 14:14], sings [1 Cor. 14:15], blesses [1 Cor. 14:16], rests [2 Cor. 2:13], is refreshed [2 Cor. 7:13], and rejoices [Luke 1:47].

Looking at this list, it seems clear that the spirit is the seat of man's emotions, purpose, and drive.

The Heart.

The "heart" is referred to in the Bible many times. The Greek word used is "*kardia*," which is recognizable as the root of many English medical words, such as "*cardiac*," etc. However, in the Bible, the usage of the word "*heart*" always denotes an organ of rational thought. For instance, the heart is the seat of "*reason*" [Mark 2:8], [Mark 8:17], [Luke 5:22]. The Greek verb for "*reason*" is "*dialogizomai*." And the noun for "*thought*" is "*dialogizmos*." And, so, reason, and its product, thought, is seated in the heart.

The Conscience.

Also seated in the heart is "*conscience*," "*syneidesis*." This word is made up jointly from "*sun*," "*together*," and "*eido*," the verb, "*to see*." The conscience provides what is called co-perception. Thus, things can be made manifest, or seen, in the conscience [2 Cor. 5:11]. Consequently, the heart can be blinded [Eph. 4:18]. And, the heart must be cleansed from an evil conscience [Heb. 10:22]. The heart, via the conscience, is therefore a seat of a kind of "seeing."

The Understanding.

The scripture says that the laws are to be placed in your "*mind*." Only, here, the Greek word is not "*nous*," but "*dianoia*." This latter word is made up from "*dia*," being the channel of an act, and "*nous*." Thus, the law is to be placed in a part of your mind which is a channel for action, rather than in a more passive place. This is the place in your mind where you were previously an enemy of God [Col. 1:21]. And, this is the part of your mind with which you are commanded to love God [Mat. 22:37], [Mark 12:30], [Luke 10:27]. The love with which you are to love God through the understanding is "*agape*" love, which is the thoughtful kind of love. So, this understanding part of your mind is a channel for action. And, it operates via remembrance ("*hupomnesis*") [2 Pet. 3:1]. Remembrance of prescriptions, rules, etc.. [Rom. 7:23]. Rules of action. Rules about how to take action.

The Will.

As your understanding formulates actions according to rules, so your will chooses and implements an action through your physical body [1 Cor. 7:36]. These will-chosen actions then become your works [Eph. 1:11]. It is at this point of will that the heart exercises control over the choice of action [1 Cor. 7:37]. Remember that the blood of the covenant perfects you to do the will of Jesus [Heb. 13:21].

Works.

All your works will be tried by fire [1 Cor. 3:13]. That is one reason why a Christian chooses to do the Lord's works, which are not valueless [1 Cor. 15:58]. The Lord's works are of benefit [Heb. 13:21]. Therefore, desire to be quick to show yourself an approved workman [2 Tim. 2:15]. But, always remember that it is really God who is doing the work through you [John 14:10]. That way, your works are really fruit of the Holy Spirit [Gal. 5:19]. And, you may continue in these works until the end [Rev. 2:26]."

3. The Conscience as a Communication Channel.

"Now that we see a scriptural plan of the believer's body, spirit, and soul, let's ask some questions:

1. Why should the laws be put in your mind and heart, and, what are these laws ?
2. What part is played in all this by the blood of the covenant ?
3. What is hardening of your heart, and how can you keep from it ?

The Laws.

There is one Lawgiver Who matters [Jas. 4:12]. All His laws are summed up in loving God with all heart, soul, and understanding [Mat. 22:37] and in loving your neighbor as yourself [Mat. 22:39]. All else follows from these two [Mat. 22:40].

Now, some might argue that Christians are under grace, not law [Rom. 6:14]. But, you are to keep the laws, anyway [Mat. 5:19]. Why? Because the law is holy [Rom. 7:12]. And, you are to be holy [1 Pet. 1:15]. Also, the law is spiritual [Rom. 7:14]. And, you are spiritual [Gal. 6:1]. You delight in the law in your spirit [Rom. 7:22]. And, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in you [Rom. 8:4]. Only the carnal mind is lawless [Rom. 8:7]. Agape love is the fulfilling of the law [Rom. 13:10]. Thus, Christians avoid striving about the law [Tit. 3:9].

The Blood of the Covenant.

The scriptures tell us that the Blood of the Covenant is Jesus' blood [Heb. 13:20]. He is the mediator of the Covenant and it is His blood which is the blood of sprinkling [Heb. 12:24]. It is that sprinkled blood that purges your conscience [Heb. 9:14]. And, since the conscience is the part of the heart that "sees" [2 Cor. 5:11], this purging keeps your heart from blindness [Eph. 4:18]. Then, your understanding is illuminated [Eph. 4:18] because your eye is good [Mat. 6:22].

Now, the light in your heart is Jesus [John 8:12]. Because you see, your heart is soft [Eph. 4:18] (blindness : *porosis*; petrification of heart). Therefore, you also hear His voice (*phone*) [Heb. 4:7] (There is no "will" in the Greek). And, His (*rhema*) words are spirit and life [John 6:63]. That life is the Blood of the Covenant [John 6:53]. So, your communion (*koinonia*) with Jesus is a communion of the Spirit [2 Cor. 13:14]. You are enjoined to not forget to keep this communication [Heb. 13:16]. To keep it you must keep your heart soft, by obedience [Heb. 3:15]. And, you should guard this communication channel by prayer and supplication [Phi. 4:6,7].

Our understanding is reinforced that real-time communication with Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, underlies all works that are to be done by His servants. You receive this communication through your conscience. You stay sensitive only through obedience. Then, His light illuminates your conscience, reason, and understanding. Then, your renewed spirit, being witnessed to by the Holy Spirit, can purpose to do God's will. These purposes are transformed into potential actions by your reason. The potential actions are given structure according to God's laws, as recalled from your remembrance. The structured actions are then implemented into Godly works, by your will, subject to the review and control of your conscience.

Now you see how the second part of the covenant fits with the first. You were previously an enemy of God in the action-channel of your understanding, which was demonstrated by wicked works. But, with the overwriting of that part of your mind with His laws, He can now justly forget your sins and iniquities. Truly, you are a vessel of His mercy. And, as such, you are to show forth His glory. You are to be a pattern to them who should believe [1 Tim. 1:13-16]."

¹ The Joshua Walk, by John H. Painter, unpublished, Copyright filed with the Library of Congress, 159 pp., 1992.

² Lord Acton – Lectures on Modern History, ed. John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence, London, Macmillan, 1906.

³ Conscience: The Voice of God in Man, by Archpriest Alexander Mileant, Translated from Pravoslavaaya Rus', 8/28/1988, Jordanville, N.Y.

⁴ Concern for Others: a New Psychology of Conscience and Morality, by Tom Kittwood, Routledge, London, 1990, ISBN: 0415043778.

⁵ Physio-sociology or psychology of conscience – reply, by M.R. Levenson, *Theory & Psychology*, 5, 139-144.