



### **AND GOD SAID ...**

Turn on the TV, go online, open a book, listen to a song, you're listening to voices. And by 'voices', I don't just mean sound-waves produced by a human voice-box. I mean ideas.

Opinions.

Influences.

Demands.

Like "an army of voices in my head," to quote a certain *Switchfoot* song. In fact, perhaps now more than ever, people have a lot to say – and an opportunity to say it.

But just because someone has a lot to say, doesn't mean it's worth listening to. I'm sure we've all known people in our lives who were full of opinions but not a lot of sense. To illustrate this, have a think about:

- What a positive voice might sound like.
- What a negative voice might sound like.

The point being: it can be hard to tell the difference sometimes – hence the need for a voice we can trust! The voice of One who knows us well. Knows us better than we know ourselves. And One who loves us enough, He's willing to tell us the truth about ourselves - including the stuff we don't want to hear.

Who has that kind of authority?

Let's look again at Genesis ch1.

### **Genesis 1:1-5**

I've been known to throw in a bit of Hebrew from time to time, but if truth be known, you probably know a lot more than you realise. E.g.: *amen* (let it be); *hallelujah* (everyone, praise the One who is); *shalom* (peace); *kosher* (clean, legit); *chutzpah* (cheek, boldness); and this one, which most of you will be familiar with: *abracadabra!* Which means?

'By my word, I create!'

Truth is, though: only God has the right to say this, because only God has the power to do it. Look again at vs3, then vs6, then vs9, then vs11, then vs14, then vs20, then vs24, then vs26. What phrase is repeated over and over?

*And God said, "Let ..."*

I.e. there is consistency and dependability to the voice of God. Which means you can trust Him to mean what He says!

But there is also a sequence here, in the form of 4 links. And each link tells us why God is worth listening to:

**1) God Says.** When the Bible says "God said", that's not to be taken in a literalistic sense (as if God has a set of vocal cords). It means that God willed it to be, and it was (Psalm 33:6-9). It's similar to ancient Egypt: if a Pharaoh wanted something, he would say it, and it would be done – and that was because the Egyptians believed the Pharaoh to be a god-on-earth (hence names like Tutmoses and Rameses, Akhenaten and Tutankhamun). In the Bible, however, there is only one Being who really possesses that level of power, that level of influence: God Himself. Which, by the way, was the message God was sending when He struck the land of Egypt with those plagues. So, everything exists because He willed it. *You* exist because He willed it! That's one reason to listen.

**2) God Does.** In Genesis 1 there are 2 main verbs to describe what God is doing. When God does something new or unique – like creating the universe, sentient life, human beings – it's the verb *bara*, 'to create.' But when He's using material that He's created already, it's the verb *asah*, 'to craft.' Whichever the verb, the point here is: God's 'voice' is actively involved in the workings of the cosmos (e.g. Psalm 29:3-9). As Augustine of Hippo once said, "Nature is God at work." Now that doesn't deny the physics / chemistry / biology of it all, but it does mean God is involved. Same as the development of a baby in a mother's womb: there's a biological process taking place, but there's also a spiritual one. Which means that God is active in your life, even if you don't recognise it!

**3) God Rules.** God doesn't just speak it and make it, He rules it (Psalm 93:3-5). And like a King over his subjects, He gives some commands, too. But in the process, He also gives meaning; purpose; a reason to exist. And human beings need it, in a way that nothing else does (how many bonobo

chimps are pondering this stuff?). As Victor Frankl, psychologist and holocaust survivor, said, "The search for meaning is *the* primary motivational force in man." I.e. human beings need a reason to be, and a bigger reason than us. Something *outside* of us. And Genesis is saying: God is that reason! God has made us to worship Him, look after one another, and tend the world He has made. And not just *for* Him, but *with* Him. We are God's co-workers, and we have a job to do. And a role to play.

**4) God Calls.** As in, He names the things He makes. And I'm not just talking about day, night, sea, sky, land. God has something else to say, too. How does each day end? "And God saw that it was ..." *Tov.* 'Good.' 'Beautiful.' But then, when He gets to human beings, He says *tov me'od.* 'Very good.' 'Very beautiful.' So, it's the human race that makes it 'very.' You – *you* – make it 'very'! You make it a masterpiece! And understand this: in the Bible, what you are called represents everything about you: your identity, your personality, your reputation, even your destiny. I.e. it is only in God that we discover our true potential. Which means God doesn't just see you as you are, He sees you as you can be; doesn't call you to live according to your past, but according to your future.

### **The Voice That Counts**

As I said at the start, we are bombarded by voices, all the time. And while some of them might be worth listening to, others certainly won't be. Even so, it can be easy to allow them to define us. The message of the Bible, however, is that it doesn't matter so much what *others* say about you – or even what *you* say about you. What matters is what *He* says about you – because He made you.

But there's another reason (John 1:1,14):

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.*

I.e. God made you, yes, but He also came for you; lived for you; died for you. And in it all, 'the Word' – *logos* – Jesus Himself – was saying, "I love you."

And He's still saying it, even now. He spoke you into being. He formed you in your mother's womb. He named you before your parents did. And He is sovereign over every aspect of your life. That doesn't mean He *controls* every aspect, as if we're nothing but robots. But it does mean He's King. And because He's King, He gives you the right to choose whether to listen to His voice, or not.

The world is full of voices – good, and bad. Will we listen to the voice of the One who truly knows us? And loves us?