

## **Jesus Speaks Back**

Summarized and posted by Bob Young

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A majority of Americans believe that Jesus speaks back to them in two-way communication, according to results from a Barna survey. While an overwhelming majority of Americans claim to pray during a typical week (more than 80%), the results point out that a majority also believes that Jesus speaks back to them. Overall, 38% said they are "completely certain" that Jesus speaks to them in ways that are personal and relevant to their circumstances. An additional 21% said they are "somewhat certain" that He does so, while 10% contend that Jesus speaks to them, but they were not as sure about that communication. Eight percent did not know if Jesus Christ speaks to them. In total, less than one-quarter of all adults (23%) stated that Jesus does not speak to them. Given that this latter number includes atheists and agnostics, an overwhelming number of those who claim to be Christians affirm that Jesus communicates with them.

According to Americans, Jesus speaks to them in many different ways. Several of those ways involve Biblical instruction through reading the Bible or preaching (Bible reading, sermons, or teaching). At least one out of every six adults contends that He communicates with them audibly. The respondents affirmed that Jesus communicates with them in the following manners:

- By influencing or connecting directly with their mind, emotions or feelings (52%).
- Through the content of a Bible passage they read or which was read to them (41%).
- By providing a sign (36%).
- Through sermon or teaching content concerning their immediate situation or need (34%).
- Through miraculous or inexplicable circumstances or outcomes (31%).
- Through words spoken to them by someone else who was speaking for God (31%).
- Through a passage they read in a book other than the Bible (18%).
- Through an audible voice or whisper that they could hear (16%).

The wording of the question may urge a positive response from the Christian community, given that the Bible claims to be a word from God. However, some of the communication claimed in the survey results is separate from Scripture. The responses seem to reflect a continuing belief in the direct operation of God to cause Christians to act. Overall, the results of the survey reflect the continuing emphasis in our nation on experiential religion, with its accompanying desire to validate the knowledge of truth through experience, or to determine what is true through experience.