

God's Voice Series 4
Recognizing God's Voice I

Text: I Kings 19:13c, 14a and 19a.

- “Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”—I Ki.19:13c.
- “And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts...”—I Ki. 19:14a.
- “So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat...”—I Ki. 19:19a

Introduction: Many believers gently ask, “How do I know God is speaking to me?” In the story of Elijah, both God’s words and Elijah’s response suggest that the voice of God is not distant or hidden, but recognizable. Jesus affirms this truth in John 10:26–27ff. Jesus does not answer the question by giving a formula or a checklist. Instead, He points us to relationship. He does not instruct His sheep on *how* to hear His voice; He reminds us of *who* hears it. Those who belong to Him recognize His voice—it flows from knowing Him.

1. Unbelief reveals relationship, not lack of information—v26.

- Jesus tells the Jews, “*You do not believe because you are not my sheep.*”
- It’s blunt, but it is meant to clarify the issue, not dismiss it. Their problem was not lack of evidence or opportunity—it was lack of belonging. Jesus is not measuring effort; He is identifying relationship. Belief flows from belonging.

2. His sheep hear His voice — recognizable responsiveness—v27a.

- “*My sheep hear my voice.*”
- The verb Jesus uses is present tense, which describes the healthy pattern, not what happens perfectly. In simple terms, this is how sheep normally respond to their shepherd.

Harriet Tubman (March 1822-March 10, 1913) testified that she listened for God’s voice in prayer and trusted it enough to follow, even when the way forward was dark and dangerous.ⁱ

3. Jesus knows His sheep — relational recognition—v27b.

- “*And I know them.*”
- The word Jesus uses for “know” speaks of personal, relational knowledge—not just information. It’s the kind of knowing that comes from relationship and belonging.

Jesus is not saying, “I know about them.” He is saying, “I recognize them as mine.” That knowing is active and ongoing.

4. His sheep follow Him — direction, not perfection—v27c.

- “*And they follow me.*”
- Again, the present tense describes a **pattern**, not flawless obedience. Following is the direction of their lives. Sheep may wander, hesitate, or stumble, but they don’t abandon the Shepherd.

Harriet Tubman did not claim flawless understanding, but she did live out what Jesus describes in John 10: “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” Her responsiveness revealed relationship.

Conclusion: Jesus does not say His sheep never struggle. They hear His voice because they belong to Him. They follow Him because He leads them.

ⁱ Christianity Today’s: Issue 62: Bound for Canaan: African in America, originally published in 1999.

Christianity Today’s: Today in Christian History entry of March 10, 1913 (Famous people’s death on that day)

JDF.