

# Jeremiah 23:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

## Analysis

**Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?** (כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו מִה־עֲנָה יְהוָה וּמִה־דִבֶּר יְהוָה, koh tom'ru ish el-re'ehu v'ish el-achiv meh-anah YHWH umah-dibber YHWH). God provides alternative language: instead of asking for the מַשָּׂא (massa, 'burden'), ask **What has the LORD answered?** (מִה־עֲנָה יְהוָה, meh-anah YHWH) and **What has the LORD spoken?** (מִה־דִבֶּר יְהוָה, mah-dibber YHWH). The verbs עָנָה (anah, 'answer') and דִּבֶּר (dibber, 'speak') restore proper orientation: God as active speaker, humans as recipients.

The linguistic shift is theologically significant. The old terminology made humans subjects ('What is God's burden for us?'), implying entitlement to divine revelation. The new phrasing makes God the subject ('What has God spoken?'), emphasizing divine initiative and human receptivity. This guards against presumptuous demanding of oracles. Similarly, prayer shouldn't demand that God speak but humbly ask if He has spoken. The reformulated questions restore proper Creator-creature dynamics, where revelation is gift, not right.

## Historical Context

This verse provides corrective liturgy—teaching God's people how to speak reverently about divine communication. Ancient Israelite religion was deeply verbal, with set formulas for approaching sacred realities. The prescribed

language ('What has the LORD answered/spoken?') modeled humble inquiry rather than presumptuous demand. This linguistic discipline aimed to reform corrupted theological culture through rehabilitated speech patterns.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does your language about God reveal presumption versus humility in seeking His will?
2. What difference exists between demanding God speak and asking if He has spoken?
3. How might reforming your God-language reform your actual relationship with Him?

## Interlinear Text

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כֹּה	תֹאמַר וְ	וְאֵל	עַל	רֵיעֵהוּ	וְאֵל	אֵל
H3541	Thus shall ye say	and every one	H5921	to his neighbour	and every one	H413
	H559	H376		H7453	H376	
אָחִי י	מָה	עָנָה	יְהוָה:	וַמָּה	דִּבֶּר	
to his brother	H4100	answered	What hath the LORD	H4100	spoken	
H251		H6030	H3068		H1696	
			יְהוָה:			
			What hath the LORD			
			H3068			