

The Voice From Heaven



SABBATH—MARCH 31

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 3:8, 9; 2 Samuel 12:1-7; Isaiah 59:2; Jeremiah 38:14-19; Ezekiel 4; Amos 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Peter 3:1.

MEMORY VERSE: “In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son [Jesus]. He [Jesus] is the one whom God appointed to receive all things. God made everything through Him [Jesus]” (Hebrews 1:1, 2, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Since the fall of Adam and Eve, the Lord has been communicating (speaking) with us through different methods.

HOW MUCH IS A HUMAN WORTH? Quite a bit! The value of the proteins, enzymes, RNA, DNA, amino acids, and biochemicals within the human body, may make a person worth millions of dollars.

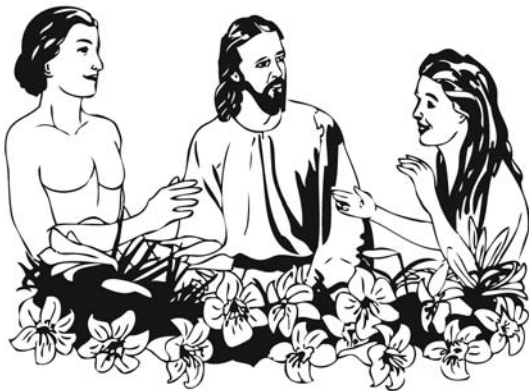
Of course, we can understand our true worth only through Jesus' life and death. God would not have paid such a great price to save us from sin if we were not so precious to Him.

How has God shown us the good news of our worth and our salvation? This week we begin by looking at the different methods (ways) God has been using to communicate with us.

Yes, God is still talking to us sinful people. The important question is, Will we listen to what He is saying?

SUNDAY—APRIL 1**GOD'S SEARCH FOR PEOPLE
(Isaiah 59:2)**

Before sin, Adam and Eve could communicate (speak) with God face to face. After sin, they no longer could speak face to face with God. It was not because God had changed. It was because Adam and Eve had changed their relationship to Him.



Before sin, Adam and Eve spoke with God face to face.

What principle¹ in Isaiah 59:2 explains what sin has done to our relationship with God?

Because of sin, Adam and Eve were not able to stand before God (Genesis 3:8). They were afraid of Him. Sin separated humanity (people) from the Creator. Sin also has separated nations, kingdoms, tribes, communities, churches, and families from one another. This is a sad fact of life we all have experienced.

¹principle—a basic rule.

What question does God ask Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:9?

Sometimes we talk about a person searching for God. But the truth is that God is searching for us. He uses all kinds of methods (ways) to lead us to salvation. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible shows God's search for us. The Bible shows God's desire to let us know He is there and He loves us, even though we have sinned (Isaiah 5:1-5; Matthew 23:37).

“Where are you?” This question does not exactly mean where our bodies are. This question is really asking about our spiritual condition. Where are we in our relationship to our Creator and Savior? If you were to hear the question “Where are you?” from God, how would you answer, and why?

MONDAY—APRIL 2**GOD AND THE PROPHETS
(Amos 3:7)**

What does Amos 3:7 tell us about how important prophets are to humans (people)?

From the earliest days, God used prophets to communicate (speak) with us. The prophets' work included many things. The prophets showed Jesus' first coming and second coming. They showed that God values humans

enough to choose prophets to reveal who He is. Prophets showed God's love and character to His people. They sent warnings about upcoming judgments. The prophets also showed the plan of salvation. And God used the prophets to help write the Bible.



God sent prophets to warn His people.

How did the prophets give their messages? 2 Samuel 12:1-7; Jeremiah 38:14-19; Ezekiel 4; 2 Peter 3:1.

Compare² 2 Chronicles 20:20 with Luke 16:31. These verses show two attitudes³ toward the prophets. We are in one of these two groups pictured in these verses. We believe what God says to us. Or we do not. In the end, our attitude toward the prophets shows our attitude toward God.

How do we know if we really believe? Can we be deceived (tricked) into thinking we believe when we really do not believe? Many of the Israelite leaders were deceived into thinking

they believed when they really did not.

This is how we know if we believe: (1) Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments (laws)” (John 14:15, NKJV) and (2) “Why do you call me [Jesus], “Lord, Lord,” and still don’t [do not] do what I [Jesus] say?” (Luke 6:46, NIV).

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we say we believe in the writings of the prophets. Do we really? Have your actions this past week shown belief or unbelief, faith or lack of faith? What is the only way you can answer this question correctly? If you could do something differently, what would it be?

TUESDAY—APRIL 3

THE REVELATION (SHOWING) THROUGH JESUS (John 14:8-11)

The coming of Jesus to this world is the greatest and most complete revelation of God ever given. Jesus was God, here in the flesh. What better revelation could we ask for?

Jesus came in a different form than what people had expected (hoped for). But His life and teaching showed God's will to the world. People who lived in the time of Jesus looked for greatness to fulfill their hopes. They hoped Jesus would come looking powerful and kingly. They did not expect Him to be humble. But Jesus faithfully showed

²compare—show how things are the same.

³attitudes—how you feel and think about something or someone.

the true character of God the Father.

What do the following verses teach us about how Jesus fully showed God?

Matthew 11:27 _____

John 1:14, 18 _____

John 14:8-11 _____

2 Corinthians 4:6 _____

Hebrews 1:1-3 _____

From John 14:8-11 we know that those who have known Jesus have known the Father. This is because Jesus and the Father are “in” each other. Their close relationship is much closer than the relationship between a master and a disciple (follower). The words that Jesus spoke were more than those of a human. His words were examples of the actions of God Himself. When we get to know Jesus, we get to know God, too. The best way to know God’s love and His goodness is to know Jesus personally (closely).

How would you tell someone what Jesus is like? Be prepared to share your answer with the class on Sabbath.

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 4

**GOD SPEAKS TODAY
(John 5:39)**

“You study the Scriptures (Bible) carefully. You study them because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study must give witness about me’” (John 5:39, NIV).

We have discussed God’s communication (speaking) through the prophets and through Jesus. But God’s communication has not happened only in Bible times.

In what other ways does God reveal Himself to us?

Job 12:7-10 _____

Psalms 107:1-8 _____

John 4:16-18, 26 _____

John 5:39 _____

Philippians 4:9 _____

2 Timothy 1:5 _____

These verses clearly show that God never planned for us to be doubtful about the purpose of life. God made sure we could know the truth and the way of salvation. God shows Himself through nature, science, the Bible, Jesus, His leading in our lives, our relationships, and the Holy Spirit. He also shows Himself through God's image (likeness) reflected (shown) in people who have dedicated (given) their lives to Him.



God shows His love to us through nature.

How has God been communicating (speaking) with you lately? But the more important question is, How well are you listening to Him? Again, you can know the answer easily simply by asking yourself:

Am I doing what God is commanding (showing) me to do?

THURSDAY—APRIL 5

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE BIBLE (2 Timothy 3:16)

Summarize the message of 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21. What should they be saying to each of us?

Many times God asked the prophets to write His messages. So many of God's messages have been saved. Those messages are in the Bible. For example, "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Exodus 24:4; also read Exodus 34:27; Leviticus 26:46). Joshua also was commanded to write (Joshua 24:26). God also asked Jeremiah to write a book including the words He would give him (Jeremiah 1). Years later Daniel (Daniel 9:2) wrote that he read Jeremiah's message (Daniel 9:2). He explained how God had promised freedom for God's people after 70 years of being slaves in Babylon. God told Daniel to write a book for people living at "the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4). So God reveals (shows) Himself through the Bible. The Bible shows God's will.

It is interesting to note that the word *Bible* is not found in the Bible. The word *Bible* comes from the Latin word *biblia*, which means "books." *Biblia* comes from the Greek word *biblos*, meaning "a book." So the Holy Bible means "the holy books." This is right,

because the Bible includes many books—39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

The Bible books come in different styles and forms. But they all speak about a loving God, who is the Creator of the universe. They all speak about how He reaches out to sinful people. The theme of God's love is the focus of every book in the Bible. This is seen especially through Christ, who came into this world, lived as a man, and died on Calvary. This is the greatest truth of the universe. All Bible truths should be studied from the truth of Jesus' cross.



The Cross helps us to understand Bible truth.

What part has the Bible played in your relationship to Jesus? What changes might you need to make so the Bible could have an even greater influence on your walk with Him?

⁴fall—when Adam and Eve sinned.

⁵great controversy—the war between Jesus and Satan over good and evil.

⁶rabbis—Jewish religious teachers.

⁷authority—the skill to make someone obey; influence or power that creates respect and trust.

FRIDAY—APRIL 6

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, “The Creation,” pp. 44–51; “The Temptation and Fall,”⁴ pp. 52–62; “The Plan of Redemption,” pp. 63–70, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; “Introduction,” pp. v–xii, in *The Great Controversy*.⁵

“Jesus met the people at their own level. He knew what questions the people had. He made truth beautiful by presenting [showing] it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, well-spoken, and clear as a running stream. Jesus’ voice was as music to those who had listened to the ‘dry’ voices of the rabbis.⁶ Jesus’ teaching was simple. But He spoke as one having authority.⁷ This made Jesus’ teaching different from the teachings of all others. The rabbis spoke as if the Bible might be interpreted to mean one thing or another. The hearers were not sure about what the verses really meant. But Jesus taught the Bible very clearly. Whatever His subject, He presented it with power, as if His word on the subject could not be overturned by what others said against His words.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 253.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ God has never given up on us. What does this fact mean to us when

we work with our family members, friends, or neighbors who are not Christians? How can we have the never-give-up spirit in reaching out to others?

② Discuss your answers to the last question in Tuesday's lesson. What do your answers have in common? How are the answers different?

③ How can you give hope to someone who is trying hard to know God and His will?

④ Share different experiences in which God spoke to you in a powerful manner. What happened? How did you know for sure it was God? Did you have any way of testing the experience to know if it really was God? If so, what was that test?