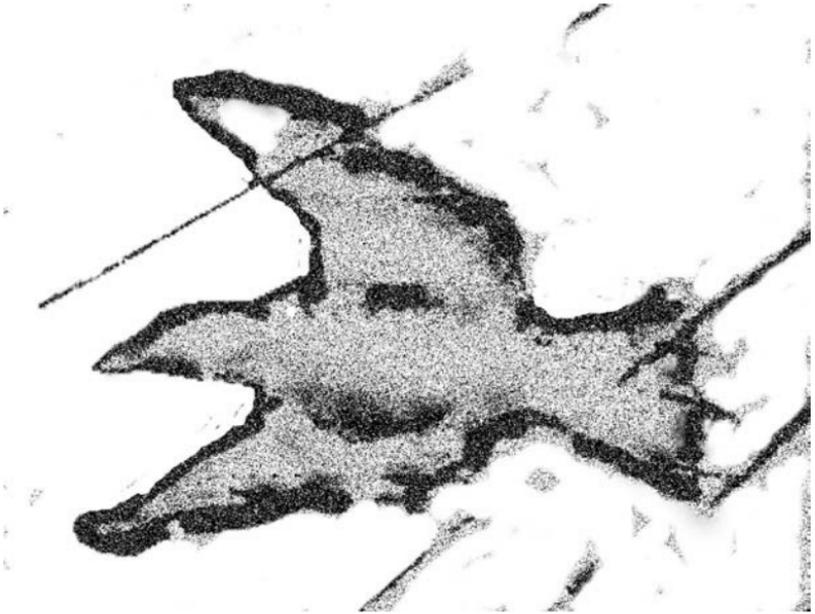


# Heaven's Means of Communication



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“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds”

(Heb. 1:1, 2, NRSV).

# The Light From Above

## INTRODUCTION

Rom. 1:20

Even before you think of moving from where you are to see what God has made, I'm sure that right where you are, there is evidence that speaks about His supernatural, divine nature. It's both amazing and fascinating to know that the explorers of the fifteenth century spent a great deal of time discovering the sources of this world's great lakes and rivers. With their intellect, they endeavored to discover some of the great wonders of earth.

Their discoveries continue to inform the world today. Furthermore, their efforts reveal more clearly that there is a divine mind behind the great features of the world. Their efforts also remind us to think of Him who has provided life for every individual on our planet.

In my native dialect, a story is told of an artist who specialized in modeling clay works. People would come from far places to see and to buy these works, and also to seek advice from the artist about his trade. Whenever they came, they found several finished products in his studio, each one featuring a certain splendor; and once there with the creator of these pieces, they knew for sure that he was the artist behind the excellent clay works they had only read about in books or heard about from other sources.

The point is, however, not the size of the created product, nor its complexity or simplicity. Rather, the point is the quality of the work done by the creator of that work. The really big question is, Who is the Creator behind the creation in which we actually live? Which message does this creation give about its Creator? How does it communicate to us about the power and ability of its inventor?

This week, we'll look at God's means of communication. After seeing Him in our own selves, it's important to learn about what nature does and does not tell us about Him. Finally, the revelation of Christ as our Savior comes to us as a new drop of rain in a desert. How does His revelation of God differ from God's other revelations?

**The revelation of Christ as  
our Savior comes to us as a  
new drop of rain in a  
desert.**

# The General and Special Means of God's Revelation

## LOGOS

Gen. 18:1–15; 32:30; Exod. 4:10–17; Ps. 19:1–6; John 1:14; 3:16, 17; Col. 2:9

### Through God's Prophets (Gen. 18:1–15; 32:30; Exod. 4:10–17)

God made humans the crowning glory of His creation. He gave us the ability to have a relationship with Him, thus making us the most beloved of His creation. This ability is seen to occur throughout history in many ways. The intervention that God makes in human life is evident from the time of the prophets to our day. In Genesis we learn that God could reveal Himself through angelic intervention (Gen. 18:1–15) or through a personal encounter with Him (Exod. 32:30). In both revelations, whether through angels or a face-to-face meeting, the point was to make known His intention regarding a specific issue or event involving selected individuals.

When God appeared to Abraham and Sarah through His holy angels (Gen. 18:1–5), He pronounced to the couple the good news concerning the birth of their son Isaac. And to Moses, God gave instructions on how to end the suffering of the Israelites in the hands of the Egyptians (Exod. 4:10–17).

**“ ‘There are two things that fill my soul with holy reverence and ever-growing wonder . . . ! ’ ”**

Likewise, Jacob, during a face-to-face encounter with God, was given a lesson which represented “the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming.”<sup>1</sup>

In all these circumstances, the intentions of God were to make His will known to the vast human population. Then, as now, we are still drawn to His heart of love, which is full of boundless grace toward sinful humans.

### Through God's Creation (Ps. 19:1–6)

Psalms 19 “is perhaps the best known and most popular of the nature psalms. It is a grateful meditation on God's revelation of Himself in the world of nature and in His law. In the first six verses of the psalm David . . . speaks of God's glory as seen in His created works; in vs. 7–10 he speaks of God's glory as shown in the law; in vs. 11–13 he discusses the bearing of these truths on character and conduct; and in v. 14 he prays to be kept free from sin. One can almost see the author standing under the open sky at sunrise, praising Jehovah in the exalted strains of this psalm. The philosopher Kant may have been thinking of Ps. 19 when he wrote:

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'There are two things that fill my soul with holy reverence and ever-growing wonder—the spectacle of the starry sky that virtually annihilates us as physical beings, and the moral law which raises us to infinite dignity as intelligent agents.'<sup>1</sup> 2

### **Through God's Own Son (John 1:14; 3:16, 17; Col. 2:9)**

As much as we can see God through the records of the prophets and through nature, we can see Him most vividly through His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ has always been with God, one with Him in purpose, will, and mission; and after the Fall of our first parents, Christ fulfilled His mission on the cross of Calvary so that we might have eternal life. On the cross—the pivotal point of our salvation—God's love radiated through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Christ is presented to us as the eternal word of God, who "became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NRSV). In Christ, we see God and His love for us (John 3:16)—that special consideration for humans which we cannot fully comprehend solely through nature and the prophets.

Christ is the only way in which our redemption can be accomplished. Therefore, faith in Him is essential to the salvation process. In Christ's death we see not only the weight of our sins but also the glorious love of God.

### **REACT**

1. Why is Christ the only bridge linking us to God? Why can we not deal with God without involving Christ?

2. Think of the beauties of nature in the part of the world where you live. Which ones inspire you the most? What do they teach you about our loving God?

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1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 675.

## “God With Us”

### TESTIMONY

John 14:8–11

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to man and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible.”<sup>1</sup> And judging from what Christ has done in our lives to restore us to God, we can safely say that through His intervention in this sin-darkened world, He revealed the light of God’s love. God reveals Himself to us through His created works and the written Word, and both have a strong blend of the power of His Son Christ.

“In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field.”<sup>2</sup>

“Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the

Saviour’s life on earth, we see ‘God with us.’”<sup>3</sup>

“For in every . . . divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see ‘God with us.’”

But even after sin had marred God’s perfect creation, God did not give Satan a foothold. “Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to

restore in man the image of his Maker. . . . He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of his divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory.”<sup>4</sup>

We can now see that although Christ came to the world in a different form from what people expected, His life and teaching demonstrated the will of God. He is the best revelation God has given of Himself.

### REACT

1. Do you know Jesus?
2. How are you reflecting His love, so that the world will recognize Him?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.

# Is There Any Revelation Beyond Christ?

Tuesday  
December 30

## EVIDENCE

Heb. 1:1, 2

Back in 1996, there was a controversial debate within our denomination concerning “progressive revelation,” “new light”; and “present truth.” These issues caused a heated debate among church members, some of whom argued outside the theological rationale which forms the bedrock of Seventh-day Adventism.

In practical terms, we refer to progressive revelation as God's continuous unfolding of truth, otherwise referred to as “new light”; and church founder Ellen White urged cofounders to look forward to discovering additional truth.

As in the Bible and during the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God is still close to His people, and as Adventists, we should know that when He wishes to communicate new light, He will reveal it to His people.

God's special revelation, or the new light for this age, is Christ, the smitten Rock, upon whom our understanding of all forms of revelation must converge. He is the light and knowledge of the world, and in Him we have a true picture of God. By His special revelation, Christ “rises above humanity, throws off the guise of sin and shame, and stands revealed, the Honored of the angels, the Son of God, One with the Creator of the universe.”<sup>1</sup> All true revelation therefore points to Him who was sent to the world not to condemn it, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16, 17).

**God's revelation of Himself through His only Son is the most special of all other revelations.**

God's revelation of Himself through His only Son is the most special of all other revelations. “Truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless. . . . Not in this life shall we comprehend the mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”<sup>2</sup>

As we continue to study this week's lesson, we will learn that both the personality and the character of God are displayed in His Son, Christ.

## REACT

1. What revelations exist that are not in harmony with the principles of Christ?
2. Why do you think Christ's revelations have more weight than these other revelations?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 210.

2. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 128.

# The Avenues of Revelation

## HOW-TO

Heb. 13:8

Since the Fall, our Creator has desired that we learn how we can return to our original status at Creation. This promise of redemption is confirmed in the revelation given by the prophets, nature, the Bible, and the life of Jesus Christ.

1. *Nature.* “‘God is love,’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green,—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God. . . .

“God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.”<sup>1</sup>

2. *The prophets.* From time immemorial, prophets have been God’s chosen agents to foretell events. Our faith is strengthened by the fulfillment of prophecies. Prophets also instruct us regarding “righteousness, spirituality, and ethical conduct.”<sup>2</sup>

**Christ is the key to our  
understanding of the  
character of God.**

3. *The Bible.* As a result of sin, our direct communication with God

was broken. However, He chose to provide a way of maintaining open communication with Him. The Bible is a revelation of how His plan for restoring communication between Himself and us is to be accomplished.

4. *Christ.* Christ is the key to our understanding of the character of God. In our effort to bring Christ before the churches and the world, we should remember that “the work of our Redeemer on this earth is and ever will be a subject that will put to the stretch our highest imagination.”<sup>3</sup>

## REACT

How has each of the above avenues of revelation helped you to understand God better?

1. *Steps to Christ*, p. 10.

2. *The SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 903.

3. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 128, 129.

# Finding God

## OPINION

Col. 1:15, 16

I am well aware of the mystery of God displayed in nature. I am also aware of the work of the Holy Spirit—His influence and what He reveals about God's character. However, the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ appeals to me the most. Our identity as Seventh-day Adventists requires that we believe in a literal, personal God who is interested in our individual actions.

In my everyday life, my friends and I spend time together sharing stories of importance in our lives. These shared experiences serve as touchstones to help me understand my friends better. The revelation through Jesus Christ is a similar touchstone for understanding God better. This revelation brings us face-to-face with infinite love and unblemished righteousness. The gift of eternal life, which comes as a result of Christ's death, would be impossible to receive without Him. This is what makes this revelation so very special. By giving Christ to identify with the fallen human race, God intended for us to know Him in a more personal way, above what we can see in nature or even what we can read about in the Bible.

Trying to find God and establish His presence in our lives may be an uphill task for many of us, but as Adventist Christians, we should always try to maintain a link to our heritage of relating Bible principles to our modern world. The Bible,

which is the Word of God, is forward thinking. And Christ is always encouraging us to be ready for the future. It seems, therefore, that God intends to lead us forward, by giving us enough evidence through the right avenues of communication.

Such evidence through the prophets, the Bible, nature, and the person of Christ is enough for us to trust God with our future.

**Trying to find God and establish His presence in our lives may be an uphill task for many of us.**

## REACT

What has been the most effective way for you to learn about God, and why is this way so appealing to you?

## EXPLORATION

Isa. 8:20

## CONCLUDE

God's means of communication with His people are many and varied. In the Garden of Eden, He talked to them face-to-face. Later, He spoke through the prophets. And as psalmists and others point out, nature also has been a vehicle for the conveyance of the divine message. Eventually, God sent His Word into the world in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ. Today, God speaks to you through the Bible and other means. Hopefully, He also speaks through you to others who need a word of hope, encouragement, or enlightenment from their Creator.

## CONSIDER

- Preparing a chart, a drawing, a painting, or even a DVD about some of God's communication methods through the ages. Consider the way He communicated with Adam and Eve to the way He communicates with you today. Yes, draw yourself or include a photograph.
- Walking around your neighborhood or a nearby park, with a camera if possible, looking for examples of how God communicates through nature.
- Selecting a psalm that speaks about God talking to His people directly through His prophets or through nature. Read it for your class, family, or friends—or for your own enjoyment and enlightenment.
- Evaluating the teachings of three denominations or religions that you know fairly well. In each case, think of one teaching that does, and one that does not, meet the test of Isaiah 8:20.
- Writing and staging a skit about a biblical experience of divine communication. Examples may be found in the stories of Adam, Moses, Samuel, Jonah, Abraham, Saul (or Paul), the woman at the well, and others.
- Writing about the two sides of the debate concerning the value, as well as the limitation or even danger, of listening to the "still, small Voice" in order to discover God's will. How does Isaiah 8:20 help resolve the debate?

## CONNECT

1 Kings 19 (especially verses 9–12).

*Mind, Character, and Personality*, chaps. 1–4; *The Great Controversy*, "God's Final Warning," pp. 603–612.