

# ***The Christian Life Revelation***

Lesson #5 for May 2, 2009

Scriptures: Exodus 7:1-6; Psalms 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-3.

1. This lesson is a discussion of the many and various ways (Hebrews 1:1) in which God has spoken to the human race down through history.
2. How many ways can you name that God has used to speak to us? In person in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:5); through nature (Psalm 19:1-4); through the Holy Spirit working with prophets and apostles (John 5:39; Hebrews 1:1); through the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16,17); through our consciences (Romans 2:14,15; compare Genesis 42:18-23; Daniel 5; Matthew 27:3-5; John 8:1-9); through miracles; through signs in the sun, moon, and stars; through experience; through personal revelation; through other Christians; and through the church.
3. Many of the founding fathers of the United States of America believed in Deism. It was common thinking in those days that God had created everything and set everything in motion, and then He had left for a "long vacation." That does not agree with the teachings of Scripture. As we look at Scripture, we recognize that from beginning to end, (Genesis 3:9; Revelation 22:17) God has spoken to us as human beings.
4. Do you believe that God makes Himself personally responsible for communicating the truth to every human being born on this earth? Do we as individuals ever go searching for God? Or, is He always the One who comes searching for us? Could we find Him? We would not know where to look! Think of all the "effort" God has "expended" to provide us with the Bible. Many individuals and groups have tried to destroy or eliminate the Bible, but they are gone and the Bible persists!
5. When God communicates with us, is He limited by our human language? Or, does God sometimes use other "tongues"? Does He connect directly to our brains through some unknown "port"? (See #14 below) If God uses some other means or language for communicating with us, how would we understand it or be able to share it with others? God cannot speak to us in the pure, beautiful language of heaven. He must use our language and everything human is imperfect.

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {1SM 20.2}

6. What can we learn about God through nature? If we begin to look at the diversity in nature and travel to places like the tropical rain forests of the Amazon in Brazil, almost immediately it becomes apparent that all the human scientists who have lived in history have not begun to uncover all that God has created. What do the sun, moon, and stars teach us about God? What can we learn about God from watching animals, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and even other human beings? What do the sun, moon, and stars teach us about God? People have worshiped them for virtually all of human history! They certainly suggest that Someone bigger and more powerful than us is out there! And everything seems to work in such an orderly manner. Science is based on the orderliness of God's laws. What can we

learn from insects? Or birds? In comparison to its size, our earth—which evolutionists and “big bang” theorists believe is a “conglomeration” of comets and chunks of space rock hitting each other—is smoother than a bowling ball or billiard ball! How did it get so smooth and even? The “big bang” theory is nothing but a smoke screen. Because, if we accept the big bang theory, next we need to ask, “Where did the big bang come from?” And no one has any idea!

7. In the deepest recesses of your mind, do you believe there is any possible way that all of the things in nature could have come about by chance over millions of years? In light of your answer, do you think Seventh-day Adventists should be supporting the “intelligent design” movement? Someone has put together a list of 49 factors that have to be balanced just right, some of them within less than one part in a billion, for human life to exist on this earth! How could one believe that it all happened just by chance? Science textbooks try to explain the evolution of the “eye” by showing a sequence from very simple light sensitive spots on the surface of a small organism all the way to the human eye. But science has now demonstrated that the DNA behind these different “eyes” is different! They could not have developed from simplest to most complicated!
8. What did God and Paul have in mind when They suggested in Romans 1:18-20 that those who see nature have no excuse because what can be known about God is clearly revealed in nature? Are the “facts” of evolution clearly revealed in nature? What methods is God using right now to communicate with man? Why did God make the sunrise and sunset so beautiful? Why did God give some roses such a beautiful smell? He did not have to. Does God continue to communicate with us even in these times when it appears that God is withdrawing Himself from the world?
9. On more than one occasion, Jesus suggested that the only way to the Father was through Him. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) If that is the case, how can we say that we can learn about God through nature? Are those two notions contradictory? These ideas are sometimes called “general revelation” vs. “special revelation.” To get to know God “personally,” we need special revelation. Some will not learn about God personally until they get to heaven!
10. What can we learn through the life, death, teachings, and miracles of Jesus that we could never learn from nature? Certainly, we learn that God cares for us individually. As human beings the most meaningful parts of our lives are when we interact in a very close relationship with other human beings. Wouldn't God want to relate to us in similar ways? Jesus, the greatest teacher the world has ever seen, spent three and one-half years in His ministry, much of it living and working with His disciples, and still, He could not get them to grasp a correct idea of His kingdom. (Luke 18:31-34) What was the problem? Could we learn about His kingdom through nature? Can nature help us to overcome our prejudices? Think of all the money people have spent trying to discover the truth about health, and we still have so much more to learn. And in our best scientific studies, all we can show is that there is a reasonable probability that life on this earth did not occur by chance! We can never “prove” the truth. Think of the scientists such as Semmelweis, Galileo, and Copernicus who almost lost their lives in trying to get people to accept new “truth” or new ideas.
11. For many of us, our day-by-day guide to what is right and wrong is a “small voice” in our heads which we call the conscience. “Conscience is sometimes defined as the faculty, or inward principle, that helps us decide between right and wrong.” *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Monday, April 27, 2009. Where does the conscience get its guidance? Is the conscience learned? Or is it genetically inherited? Do even the most hardened criminals have

a conscience? How does our knowledge of God impact our conscience? Can you mention any stories in the Bible that clearly reveal the impact of conscience acting on the minds of individuals? (Romans 2:14,15; Genesis 42:18-23; Daniel 5; Matthew 27:3-5; John 8:1-9)

12. To what extent is one's cultural background responsible for his/her conscience? Can one's conscience always be relied upon as being trustworthy? Does that depend on one's previous responses to its "promptings"? Does it depend upon one's childhood upbringing? What impact do parents have on one's conscience? Why do you think people "in good conscience" sometimes disagree about what is right?
13. Apparently, it is possible to "damage" one's conscience or to make it a less reliable guide. How does that happen? (1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15)
14. Do the Holy Spirit and the heavenly angels speak to us through our conscience? If not through our conscience, how do they speak to us? How do the Devil and his evil angels speak to us and tempt us? Is there a hidden "portal" to our brains? How do we have an imagination? Can God and the Devil reach directly into our brains and "touch" our nervous systems? How much are our thoughts affected by what we eat? How do we "open the door" to Satan's temptations? What do we mean when we say that Christ "stands at the door and knocks"? (Revelation 3:20) How do we exercise our "choice"? Satan would control us if he could. He would destroy us if he could. But somehow, God limits him. How does that work? God never forces us.

The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life. Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind. In consideration of these facts, how important that ministers and people who profess godliness should stand forth clear and untainted from this soul-debasing vice! {2T 347.2}

15. What steps do you go through in making important moral choices? Does your conscience play a major role? Are you certain that God and the Holy Spirit by their collective influence have a major impact? What impact do the Devil and his angels have on your moral choices? How do they influence you?
16. Do you think you have ever made a wrong choice while thinking at the time that it was a good choice? How does that happen?
17. What do you think David had in mind when he wrote, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8) In what different ways can we actually "taste" the Lord? Is it clear in your mind when you are actually able to "taste" the Lord?
18. The bulk of what we generally regard as God's communication with human beings has come through prophets and apostles. What do you think of when someone says "prophet"? What do you think of when someone says "apostle"? Do you consider Ellen White to be a prophet? Why? Or, why not? Ellen White states:

Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?—Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies. {1SM 32.4}

19. Read Exodus 7:1-6. God instructed Moses that Aaron was to be his "prophet"—the one who

was to speak for Moses to Pharaoh. Does that give us some clues about how prophets are supposed to help communicate from God to us? This passage seems to suggest that the prophet never speaks on his own behalf. Is that true? Do prophets ever have their own ideas? The Greek word “prophet” comes from two words “pro” meaning “on behalf of” or “for” and “phemi” meaning “to speak.” A modern equivalent word would be “ambassador.” The word “apostle” comes from a Greek word meaning one sent out to do a task. The Latin for that comes into English as “missionary.”

20. Do you believe that the work of prophets continued beyond the times of the Old Testament into the times of the New Testament and perhaps even after the time of the New Testament? Can you name any prophets from the New Testament? (Luke 1:67; 2:36; **Acts 13:1**)
21. When Paul wrote about the “gifts” that God has given to His church, prophecy always played a major role. (1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:1-5) We also know that there will be many false prophets up to the very end of this earth’s history. (2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 2:20; Matthew 24:11) Are you fully convinced that the remnant church of God in the last days will have in its midst one or more prophets? (Revelation 12:17; 19:10) What do these verses mean to you? Are we speaking the truth about God at this point in history? Are we “prophets”?
22. Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would exist today without the work and prophecies of Ellen White? Do you think the Adventist Church has had or will have other prophets? How many church members does God expect to speak on His behalf?
23. In His prayer just before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, Jesus said that to know God is life eternal. (John 17:3) What is the essential information that we need to know about God? What are the best sources for getting that information? Are there some portions of that message that need to come through nature? Are there some portions of that message that need to come through the Scriptures? Are there some portions that can be discerned only by learning about the life and death of Jesus? Are there some portions of the knowledge about God that must be learned by personal experience?
24. Many more “false prophets” have existed in our world’s history than those that were true. How would you distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet? Do you think you have personally known any false prophet?
25. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in revelation?
26. The New Testament teaches us that Jesus was an exact likeness of His Father. (Hebrews 1:1-3) Jesus was surprised—even pained—when His disciples asked Him to show them the Father! He could not believe that He had been with them so long and they still did not “see” that He was just like the Father. (John 14:9)
27. Is it clear in your mind how God has revealed Himself all the way through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation? Do you find the New Testament to be far more revealing and far more useful than the Old Testament? Why? Or, why not?
28. There are approximately 24 books mentioned in the Bible which we apparently no longer have. Those books are referred to as if they were accurate and authoritative. Do you think there has been a lot of inspired material that has gotten lost over the millennia?
29. Why do you think our Bible was preserved as it is? Do you think we have enough information in our Bible as we have it now to guide us safely into the kingdom of God? Ellen White suggested that if we would study our Bibles carefully, truth from Scripture would broaden and

deepen continuously as we studied. (*My Life Today*, p. 26)

30. Bibles are generally more available today than they ever have been previously in the history of our world. There are hundreds of translations and paraphrases just in the English language! Do you think that more people are reading them? Or, is Bible study waning as people are spending more and more time on the Internet, watching television, listening to radios, iPods, etc.? How much time do you spend in serious reflection, study, and meditation on the truths of Scripture vs. the time which you spend listening to the radio, watching television, or on the Internet?
31. Hundreds of times Ellen White wrote that Christ came to this earth to “reveal” the Father. What specifically do you think she had in mind? Read *Great Controversy* p. 555. What is implied when one says, “By beholding, we become changed”?
32. What is the most effective way to get to know God better? What have you learned recently about God? Do you find that your Sabbath School class, your church services, and your association with other Seventh-day Adventists and with other Christians is a clear revelation of God?
33. For those of you who are married, how did you get to know your spouse? How do we normally get to know someone well? God cannot appear to us in Person in our sinful condition without destroying us. So, how do we communicate with Him and get to know Him better? Jesus is the bridge between God and us. Do you believe that you know Jesus pretty well? Do you wish you knew Him even better? How could you get to know Him better? Read John 5:36-40. What three witnesses did Jesus speak about that teach us about Him?
34. We know that many of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ day memorized large portions of, if not the entire, Old Testament. They spent their lives doing that! They “knew” the Scriptures. But did they “know” the “God of Scriptures”? Why? Or, why not?
35. Has God adequately revealed Himself to us? Has He removed every possibility of doubt? Why? Or, why not?
36. Are you completely convinced that we are approaching the end of this earth’s history? Do you expect to see Jesus and the Father very soon? Are you comfortable with the idea of seeing Jesus come again?
37. Do you believe that God is communicating to you on a week-by-week, even a day-by-day and hour-by-hour basis? If not, why not? Could you be a prophet of God? Does God want you to be a prophet for Him?
38. For those of us who have come to love the “great controversy, trust, healing model of salvation,” getting to know God is the essence of the plan of salvation. In what ways have we gotten to “know” God better? What resources have been the most helpful? Do we know God so well that not even the Devil himself—posing as Jesus Christ—could confuse us or deceive us in our knowledge of God? (Revelation 13) Do we represent God correctly? To our children? To others?

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