

## Assurance of Salvation Part 96

Prayer:

Communication with God

PRAYER ISSUES

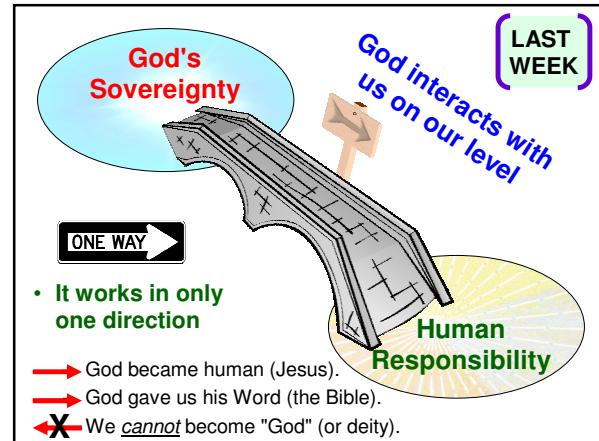
## PART 7: Communication with God

LEARNING ABOUT  
PRAYER

> Last week <

- We saw that God "bridged the gap" between humans and God.
  - This made it possible for us to have interaction with God.
  - **This is why we can have COMMUNICATION with God.**

OUR TOPIC  
TODAY



## PART #1 Our communication with God



- How God bridged the "communication gap."
- How this affects our communication with God.

## How God bridged the "communication gap."

What God did for us and in us (3 things).



- God made it possible for us to know him.

- The Father chose to adopt us.
- Jesus revealed the Father to us.

(Romans 8:15-16; Matthew 11:27; and others)

## 2. Jesus did the work that removed the barrier.



- He took on **human flesh**, in order to: 1) take on our sin and 2) bear our punishment.
- He rose from the dead, in order to: 1) bring us new life, and 2) make us recipients of God's covenant promise.
- He conquered death for us, in order that we could: 1) enter the kingdom of God, and 2) become part of the community of believers (the church, his "body").
- (And he did so much more!)

(Philip. 2:6-8; Heb. 2:14-17; 9:14-15; Eph. 2:12-13, 19-22; Col. 1:13; and others)

## 3. God embeds a new set of values in our heart.



- The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures, to teach us God's ways. (He also helps us in our prayers.)
- God embeds his law in our hearts, so we begin to have both a desire to obey him, as well as the ability to do so.



**KEY ISSUE:** This change in values is an ongoing process. (If no change is occurring, you have reason for concern.)

(Romans 8:13-15, 26; Hebrews 10:16; Philippians 2:13; and others)

## How this affects our communication with God.

(4 things)

- Our communication with God is called "Prayer." (You already knew this!)
- What God did (in us and for us) will affect what we do in prayer.

**KEY ISSUE:** As we grow in Christ, we will grow in the 4 areas described below.

- In these matters, none of us are 100% perfect yet.

### #1. Our prayer becomes an expression of trust and loyalty.

- "I trust you in all things that happen in life."
- "Come what may, you are my God, and I will follow you!"
- "There is nothing in my life that I will hold back from you!"

You are my God!

Looking at even just 1 issue shows us why it's a "growing process"!

Every day something happens that shows us we are weak and need God's help to do these things!  
(But don't use "growing" as an excuse for choosing to "not grow"! Laziness is incompatible with "following Jesus.")

### #2. We will freely express our needs to God... and will let Scripture define what our needs are.



- When God changes us, our needs become redefined. They become God-centered, not self-centered.
- We discover that "need" and "want" are not the same. There are "needs" we may not want; there are "wants" we may not need.
- We realize that we don't always understand our needs. (But God does.)

### #3. We abandon techniques and manipulation; we don't have a demanding attitude.

- This is what the unsaved do! Why imitate their ways?
- After all, God is already eager to give us what is best! Why try to get him to change, based on our limited understanding of life?



### #4. We place ourselves in God's hands; we let him decide the outcome.



He's taking care of the whole world...  
*Can't I trust him to take care of me?*

## PART #2

# God's communication with us



Two ways: 1) Special Revelation (direct from God), and  
2) General Revelation (all other ways).

### "Special Revelation"

(Direct from God: 2 ways only.)

- In Special Revelation, God discloses himself:
  - 100% accurately and
  - in the fullest way possible.
- There are 2 types of "Special Revelation." Both are described as...

"The WORD of God."

### The WORD of God: The BIBLE

For **the word of God** is living and active.  
Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the **word of God**, ... you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the **word of God**, which is at work in you who believe.

1 Thes. 2:13 (NIV)

### The WORD of God: The BIBLE

- **It is objectively true and reliable.**
    - 100% accurate, trustworthy, without error... whether or not we accept it.
    - We are to submit to it. (It does not submit to us.)
  - **It is redemptive.**
    - The Holy Spirit uses this (and only this)\* to bring us to repentance and salvation.
    - Those who submit to it (= what it teaches) are saved!
- \* (God may use other means for bringing us to the Bible; but they aren't what he uses to save us.)

### The WORD of God: JESUS CHRIST

In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God.  
**The Word** became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1, 14 (NIV)

... his name is the **Word of God**.

Rev. 19:13b (NIV)

### The WORD of God: JESUS CHRIST

- **The fullest revelation of God**, in human form.
- **He is temporarily absent from the earth.**
  - The only Special Revelation we have with us right now is the Bible.
  - Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to use the Bible, to bring us to him.

"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:11b (NIV)

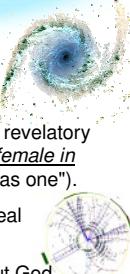
## "General Revelation"

(Any other way by which God reveals something about himself or his will.)

- **Examples:**

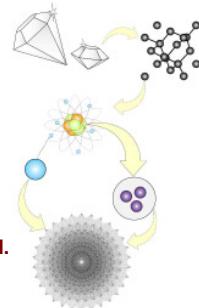
- **Creation** itself is revelatory of God.
- **Humans**, being "in God's image," are revelatory of God – as individuals, and as male/female in marriage (= the "group unit," the "two as one").
- **Events and circumstances** may reveal something about God or his will.
- **Even "laws of nature"** teach us about God.

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- **From this revelation, we can learn:**

- God's power and glory.
- Something about God's nature and goodness.
- Design, a reflection of the Designer.
- Concepts and illustrations that help us understand spiritual truths.
- How all of life is interrelated.
- Etc.



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- **It is present everywhere.**

- Even though sin has blinded us to its presence.

The **heavens** declare the glory of God;  
the **skies** proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth **speech**;  
night after night they display **knowledge**.  
There is no speech or language  
where their voice is not heard.  
**Their voice goes out** into all the earth,  
their words **to the ends of the world**.

Psalm 19:1-4a (NIV)

- **It is clearly seen, so people have no excuse for rejecting it.**

- Even though, by nature, people do reject it.

... since what may be known about God is **plain to them**, because **God has made it plain to them**.  
For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been **clearly seen**, being **understood** from **what has been made**, so that **men are without excuse**.

For although **they knew God**, ...

Romans 1:19-20, 21a (NIV)

## General Revelation needs Special Revelation,

in order to understand it correctly.

- **Even before sin entered the world.**

- Even Adam needed instructions direct from God, in order to understand his place in creation. He couldn't just look around and "know" from what he saw.

- **Even more so because of the effects of sin.**

- Creation has become broken by the presence and effects of sin... (Examples: pain, death, decay.)
- It has become our nature (from birth) to distort or suppress what can be understood about God.

... they **neither glorified** him as God **nor gave thanks** to him,

They **exchanged the truth** of God for a lie, ...

... they **did not think it worthwhile** to retain the knowledge of God, ...

Romans 1:21b, 25a, 28 (NIV)

- Until Special Revelation changes the very foundation of our thinking, we will continue to misunderstand and distort General Revelation.

[People]... who **suppress the truth** ...

... they **deliberately** forget...

Romans 1:18b (NIV) / 2 Peter 3:5a (NIV)

## General Revelation cannot save people.

- SALVATION WAS NEVER ITS PURPOSE!!!!**
  - You will interpret it based on your spiritual condition.
  - People can accept it the way God intended, only to the extent that Scripture has changed their thinking.
- But God can use it to point people in the right direction.**
  - Either to restrain sin, or to lead them to the Bible.  
(And then he can use the Bible to save them.)

## PART #3

### Responding to God's revelation

- ALL people – saved and unsaved – do respond.**
  - UNSAVED:** By suppressing it (all or in part).
  - SAVED:** By submitting to it (a growing process, as God changes their values).

### How God could use both General and Special Revelation to SAVE a person.

Through General Revelation, I knew there was a God.

= [G.R.] Nature, ourselves and our consciences, life events, sometimes even dreams & visions.

Through Special Revelation, I met him and he became my God.

= [S.R.] The Scriptures (the WORD of God), led by the Holy Spirit, who opens our eyes to what it says.

(At the time it is happening, we might not understand the different ways these 2 types of revelation work.)

### Once saved, 2-way communication will begin with God.

This will be a growing relationship.

#### • Our communication with God:

- We will begin to pray the way he teaches us in his Word.
- We will begin to trust him no matter how he responds to our prayer requests.



- God's communication with us:** 
- A) Through Special Revelation:**
  - He will reveal his will through the Scriptures.
- B) Through General Revelation:**
  - He will guide us by means of life's circumstances and events, our gifts and abilities, the opportunities we may have, etc.
  - **But we must evaluate these things in light of God's Word, in order to interpret them correctly!**  
(Just because we "can" do something doesn't mean we "ought to" do it! It could contradict God's will, as revealed in Scripture!)

### YOUR MISSION: COMMUNICATE!

 TALK!

**COMMUNICATION GOES BOTH WAYS!**

 LISTEN!

- Evaluate both aspects of your communication with God: Your talking and your listening.
- Make some effort to strengthen where you are weak: Do some growing!

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