

The God Who Speaks

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[0 : 0 0] heavenly father we thank you again that you do speak to us through your word and so father we pray this morning that you would help us to listen but more than listen to take it to heart that we may honor you in the way that we live we ask it in jesus name amen well there's a bank in indonesia where the builders did not listen to the architect and his plans and so they built the atm machine a little high so on the first slide this is the bank of indonesia and on this next slide just a little high and so basically question do we listen when people speak i suppose it does depend though on who's speaking doesn't it so let me rephrase the question do we listen when god speaks for as we come to some come to psalm 19 this morning david recognizes that god speaks to us in two ways there's two forms of revelation if you like and the first is through the voice of creation point one verse one the heavens declare the glory of god the skies proclaim the work of his hands day after day they pour forth speech and night after night they reveal knowledge what are the heavens declaring verse one well the glory of god that is the heavens declare the splendor the greatness of the one who made them and what do the skies proclaim well the work of his hands that god is a powerful creator of the world and so i take it that in verse two when it says day after day they pour forth speech and night after night they display knowledge i take it that the speech and knowledge they pour forth is that there is an awesome god who is the creator of the world someone once said that the universe is too big and too ordered to be an accident there must be an amazing creator behind it i mean just think about the sun for a moment the sun apparently loses four million tons of its mass every second as it burns up four million tons every second as it burns up but it is so big that it can still keep burning for another six billion years extraordinary i don't know how they work that out that's extraordinary as well but the sun is extraordinary so how much more so must be the god who made it you see creation screams out that there is an amazing creator called god and what's more everyone can hear the voice of creation look at verses three to six it says they have no speech no audible speech they use no words no sound is heard from them but verse four their voice goes out into all the earth their words to the ends of the world in the heavens god has pitched a tent for the sun it is like a bridegroom coming out from his chamber like a champion rejoicing to run his course it rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other and nothing is hidden from its warmth you see although creation does not use words they are still speaking in a way that everyone can hear that's the point david makes with the sun he says it's like a bridegroom who leaves his pavilion his chamber bright and happy like when the sun rises and then from our perspective it rises in the east and runs its course across and sets in the west

it covers the whole span of humanity you see nothing is deprived or literally nothing is hidden from its heat so assuming it's not cloudy it's not at the moment everyone can see the sun can't they everyone feels its heat and david's point here is that the voice of creation is like the sun it goes out from one end of the heavens to the other and just as no one is hidden from the sun's heat so no one is hidden from creation's voice it's as though god is speaking through creation 24 7 and saying here i am now bible scholars call this kind of knowledge about god general revelation because god reveals his general character as creator to the general public i think i got a slide with the definition general revelation god reveals his general character to the general public that's the technical word for it and it's what we see in the new testament as well for example on the next slide is paul from romans chapter 1 he says for since the creation of the world god's invisible qualities that is his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen how well being understood from what has been made in creation so that men or people are without excuse you see knowledge about god as creator is open to everyone so no one has an excuse for not seeking to worship god as creator that's what paul is saying here when i was growing up one of the common questions going around was what about those people in deepest darkest africa who have not heard about god will they go to heaven but this psalm is saying they have heard for everyone hears the voice of creation 24 7 declaring god's existence and that he is the powerful creator of the world it's just that some people simply don't listen of course the voice of creation does have its limitations doesn't it see while general revelation speaks to the general public it speaks only of god's general character that he's the creator of the world it doesn't say much more than that it doesn't say whether god is just or holy or something else creation can only point to us to a creator not to a personal and loving lord but david recognizes that god speaks to us in a second and more direct way god speaks through the voice of scripture point to verse 7 so in your bibles there verse 7 to 9 we read the law of the lord is perfect refreshing the soul the statutes of the lord are trustworthy making wise the simple the precepts of the lord are right giving joy to the heart the commands of the lord are radiant giving light to the eyes the fear of the lord is pure enduring forever the decrees of the lord are firm and all of them are righteous you see here david uses different words to describe god's word he calls god's word the law the statutes the precepts the commands the decrees they are all different ways of talking about god's word even the phrase fear of the lord in verse 9 is another way of referring to god's word because in proverbs we're told that the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom and that's what god's word contains wisdom that endures forever wisdom that is pure wisdom and statutes and commands and so on but notice that they are all of the lord do you see how that phrase is repeated there

the law of the lord the statutes of the lord the precepts of the lord and so on in other words the scriptures are of the lord they are from him they're his words to us and they speak to us in a more direct and specific way than creation does and they give us more direct and specific information about who god is and how it is we are to live for him so let me give you an example at the start of the ten commandments which will be on the next slide which is you know the law of god god reminds the israelites that he saved them from egypt and then how they to live in response so just for example he says god spoke all these words i am the lord your god who brought you out of egypt out of the land of slavery you shall have no other gods before me and on he goes and so here we see that god is a god who saves people that's something creation can't tell us and we also learn that we are once saved are to live for god alone we have no other gods before him what's more these commandments were not only revealed to the general public so they were not revealed to the general public like creation is rather they were revealed to a special group of people the israelites and so scholars call this bible or god's scriptures his special or specific revelation so on the next slide is a definition you see because god reveals himself in a more specific way through a specific group of people and it tells us specific things about him the scriptures are god's special revelation to us revealing much more than a creator god they reveal a personal lord who loved us loves us and saves us and shows us the best way to live i've heard people say that they like going to like going for bushwalks in nature so that they can get to know god better and get become closer to god by spending time out in god's creation and you know that's not a bad thing to do the world's a beautiful place but that's not where you go to get to know god better you'll never get to know god better from creation you might appreciate him more as an amazing creator but if you want to know god better then this is where you go his special specific revelation to us the scriptures the bible and the scriptures are worth reading because of what they are like and what they give see verse 7 again verse 7 back over the page what are they like well they are perfect and what do they give well they refresh or revive the soul and over the page what are the statutes of the lord like well they are trustworthy and what do they give well they give wisdom to the simple what are the precepts of the lord like well they are right and what do they give joy to the heart and so on you see the scriptures are worth reading more than any other book because of what they are like and what they give our girls growing up uh love these books where you have to press buttons this book is fitzherbert frog loses his voice and you press the button i can't get it to stop now anyway and so you know they love reading that but and you know that's all good fun and well and but i'm not sure fitzherbert the frog would revive the soul in fact another book they had was this one up here angelina ballerina and you press the button and it makes this high-pitched ballerina music we lost that one as i said these books are good fun most of them but they are not pure they're not trustworthy they're not right they do not give wisdom

to the simple they do not revive the soul the same way god's word does and so above all books the bible is worth reading because of what it is like and what it gives in fact this is what makes the scriptures so valuable so have a look at verse number 10 he says they the scriptures are more precious than gold than much pure gold they are sweeter than honey than honey from the honeycomb by them your servant is warned and in keeping them there is great reward i wonder if that's how we view the bible god's special revelation to us i mean for us is god's word more precious than gold what are we willing to give up to spend time reading it people have given up their lives in our age to smuggle bibles to other people so they can read it you see they knew its value do we know how valuable god's word is as david did but david also knows that while there is great reward in keeping god's laws he hasn't always and so he responds by seeking forgiveness point three verse 12 he says but who can discern their errors their own errors forgive my hidden faults keep your servant also from willful sins may they not rule over me then i will be blameless innocent of great transgression see david knows that while scriptures may revive our soul it is only because they point to a god who forgives our sin and so david prays that god might forgive any hidden faults in him he prays that he might live god's way that he might be blameless before god and so as one who clings to a rock in a flood to save them so david clings to god to forgive and redeem him and in light of that forgiveness david then seeks to please god his rock and redeemer so have a look at the last verse verse 14 he says may these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight lord my rock and my redeemer well what about us what about god's voice to us our final point as we've seen david says god speaks to us in two ways through the voice of creation and through the voice of scripture but god speaks a third way you see the scriptures that david refers to here in this psalm are technically the old testament law those first five books of the bible that god gave through mooses and later on the scriptures became a term to refer to the first five books and the prophets in other words the whole old testament but after david god spoke in a third and much fuller way he spoke through his son jesus and that's what we heard in our first reading did we not on the slide is the first few verses from hebrews chapter one it says this in the past god spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe the son is the radiance of god's glory and the exact representation of his being you see while god speaks through his voice of creation and while god has spoken in the past through the prophets he has spoken most definitively to us through his son jesus

and this word of god in jesus is fuller and more complete because jesus is god the exact representation of god's being it says this is what we remember at christmas time that jesus came into this world as immanuel god with us and he came to save us and to reveal god to us in a more complete way see jesus is completely god therefore jesus is able to perfectly reveal god to us when jesus speaks it is god speaking when we look at jesus's character we see god's character so if you want to know what god is like then look to jesus jesus is god's ultimate special revelation in fact in the new testament the phrase word of god refers most often to the gospel of jesus for jesus is god's ultimate word and god is still speaking to us through him because the words and works of jesus are recorded for us in the new testament but the question is are we listening are we listening to jesus when he says he is our rock and redeemer do we listen to jesus when he says i am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me are we listening to jesus when he offers us forgiveness and eternal life by believing in him have you listened to him by turning and putting your trust in jesus and for those of us who have then do we still delight in god's word and in particular do we still delight in the word of god seen in the son of god that is do we still delight in hearing the gospel of jesus which speaks of his death and resurrection even though we've heard it hundreds of times before or do we think oh here we go again in the words of this psalm is the word of god in the gospel still sweeter than honey more valuable to us than even gold and for john newton it was he wrote the hymn how sweet the name of jesus sounds in a believer's ear or like poor barker's friend stephen who is in china has next to nothing yet joyfully serves christ and delights in sharing and hearing the gospel because for him it truly is worth more than gold i was once speaking with a christian friend who said some people think you shouldn't preach about jesus every week at church because people might get sick of hearing it but the friend said but i love hearing it every single week do we still delight in the gospel like this friend is it sweeter than honey more valuable than gold to us of course to delight in god's word means we need to read our bibles during the week doesn't it and not just on sunday so how are you going with that i know many here do read their bibles during the week which is terrific you use things like every day with jesus and so on it's terrific to see people listening to god's voice in his word during the week as well as on sundays and this is important because it's through the bible that god primarily works to change us and make us more like his son that's where the spirit works most effectively through the word of god in fact in ephesians 6 the sword spirit the spirit the sword of the spirit is the word of god i remember doing a beach mission which is where you go to a caravan park over christmas holidays and you run activities for kids and so on and share jesus with them i remember doing this mission once with a guy who was about to give a talk i asked him what bible passage he'd chosen he said oh he hadn't chosen anything in fact he had no notes at all instead he was just going to say what the spirit guided him to say but the thing is the spirit points us to the word of jesus that's why he came to remind the disciples

[20 : 03] all of what jesus said john 14 and as i said the sword of the spirit is the word of god ephesians 6 people sometimes say we neglect the spirit but if we're focusing on jesus in god's word then we're doing exactly what the spirit wants us to do for it is through god's word about god's son that god's spirit primarily works and he works to change us to be more like jesus and so we need to keep reading god's word and to keep listening to god of course listening also means doing doesn't it i mean how can god's word give us wisdom if we hear but then don't do it how can it refresh the soul if we hear but then ignore it how can we be changed if we hear but then resist the spirit's promptings i must confess one time i did not listen to my wife speaking just once as she told me not to park the car in a certain spot i heard her say it but then practice what many of us blokes have selective deafness and so i that is i chose to ignore and not put into practice what she said and as it turned out my wife was right again and i got a parking infringement i'm ashamed to say i listen to her now but you see to listen to god's voice means not only hearing him speak as we read the bible it also means trying to do what he says for it's by truly listening to god reading and doing that god's works in us to make the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts pleasing to him let's pray heavenly father we do thank you that you speak to us in a general way through creation but in a specific way through your word and most completely through your son recorded for us in the bible help us to listen therefore to your voice in your word by reading and doing what it says and as we read it may your spirit help us to understand and obey so that through your word and spirit you might change us to be more like jesus so that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts would indeed be pleasing in your sight oh lord our rock and our redeemer amen forum is great so