

# The God Who Speaks

By Al Felder

*"<sup>1</sup>Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. <sup>3</sup>For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. <sup>4</sup>They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. <sup>5</sup>They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."* (Jeremiah 10:1-5)

Much of the ancient world was steeped in idolatry. Man knew that someone was responsible for creation, but he often sought out a god of his own making that he could control. God's people of old were not immune to this tendency. Israel often allowed herself to be influenced by the nations around her, and sought after their manmade gods. The prophet Jeremiah pointed out the foolishness of this error. These manmade gods had to be carried from place to place because they could not move. There was no need to fear them because they could not do evil or good. Most importantly for our study, they could not speak. The One True God is a God of communication. For just a little while this we would like to examine this idea of "The God Who Speaks."

Skeptics often ask the question, "Where did God come from?", or "Who created God?" Questions such as these assume that at some point in time God came into being. This is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is the creator. He created time and space, therefore, He is beyond it and not limited by it in any way.

Consider the opening verse in the Bible. *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* (Genesis 1:1) Time has a beginning. It is not something that has always existed. Therefore, God did not come into existence at some point in time.

The Bible clearly shows that God is the source of all things. *"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (Revelations 22:13) Rather than having a beginning, God is the beginning of all things. He is absolute. In order to help you understand this Biblical teaching you could draw a line, and that line would represent time. Everything that we know, all of creation, would be included in that line. It has a beginning and an end. God is outside of that line. He is not bound by it, or limited by it in any way. In fact, it originated from Him.

It is amazing to realize as you read that Bible the fact that the Earth is unique. God began creating it on the first day of creation. On that first day the Bible mentions water being

on the earth. On the second day God formed the atmosphere. On the third day God made the dry land and all manner of plant life.

Then, on the fourth day we find something very interesting.

*“<sup>14</sup>And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for season, and for days, and years: <sup>15</sup>And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”* (Genesis 1:14-19)

As you read these verses one thing becomes undeniably clear, the earth is three days older than any of the other planets and stars in the universe. God created the sun, moon, and stars after He had created the earth. In fact, only one day was used to create the vast expanses of the universe.

As great as the universe is, God is greater. *“He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”* (Psalm 147:4) The universe is so large that our minds cannot comprehend its size. It contains more stars than we could ever count. Yet, God knows them all by name.

The Bible teaches that the purpose of the stars and planets is to divide the day from the night; to be for signs, seasons, days, and years. Their most important purpose, however, is to declare God’s glory. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.”* (Psalm 19:1) The New Testament confirms this as well. *“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”* (Romans 1:20) God’s eternal power and His divine nature are clearly revealed through His creation.

As we already stated, God made the Earth unique from all of the other planets and stars. Whereas they were created in one day, God took five days to create Earth. It was upon Earth that God created life. *“<sup>3</sup>When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; <sup>4</sup>What is man, that thou are mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visiteth him?”* (Psalm 8:3, 4) It is amazing that the creator of such a vast universe would concern Himself with something as small as man. Yet, the Bible makes it clear that man is very important to God.

Just as the Earth is unique from the other stars and planets, God made man unique from the rest of creation. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”* (Genesis 1:26) Prior to this event God simply spoke and the rest of creation came into being. With man,

however, a Divine Council takes place. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit discuss what was to be the crown jewel of their creation. Man was to be different from the rest of creation. God made man to be different, wonderful, the most excellent of all His creation. God made man in His image, after His likeness.

The terms image and likeness are used interchangeably in describing man. Man being made in the image of God, after His likeness, means that he bears a resemblance to God. This includes man's spiritual aspect but it also includes other features of man as well. Man made in the image of God means that he reflects his creator in those capacities and capabilities which separate him from the rest of creation.

As we consider the idea of man being made in the image of God, there is one significant point that stands out among the others. When God chose to come into this world, He did so as man. *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14) When the word became man, He shared our limitations. He felt pain, frustration, hunger, thirst, loneliness, and rejection just as we do. Yet, He experienced these things without sin.

The purpose of Jesus coming into this world was twofold. By His death and resurrection He provided the remedy for sin. By the life that He lived, He gave man a visual picture of God.

*"<sup>8</sup>Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. <sup>9</sup>Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? <sup>10</sup>Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."* (John 14:8-10)

In this discussion that Jesus had with His disciples, Philip expressed his desire for Jesus to show him the Father. Jesus very plainly told him that to know Him (Jesus) is to know the Father.

When Jesus came to this world He did so as a man. His humanity was so genuine that people couldn't swallow the thought of His deity. They were offended by it. To them, He looked ordinary. His life was ordinary. They knew Him as the son of the carpenter. He grew from a child to a man just as they did. He got up every morning and put in a full day's work just as they did. In fact, He was like them in every single way except one, He was without sin. Through the incarnation of Jesus, God speaks even more to the point of what it means for man to be made in His image.

Man's ability to communicate is a likeness to God that sets him apart from all other creation. The Bible presents God as a communicator. In the beginning He speaks to the man and the woman that He created. *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."* (Genesis 1:28) God created man with the ability to speak, and his vocabulary is shown by his ability to name the animals. *"And*

*Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.*" (Genesis 2:20) This ability likens man to God, and sets him apart from the rest of creation.

Not only can man speak, he can write in order to communicate as well. This is a likeness of God too. *"And he gave unto Moses when he had made an end of communicating with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."* (Exodus 31:18) God has communicated unto man through His written word. Man having the likeness of God gives him the ability to understand this word. It is through God's written word that man can learn of Him.

Creation itself declares the glory of God, but in order to have an understanding of who He is we must turn to His word. *"<sup>9</sup>But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. <sup>10</sup>But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10) The only way that we can know of His character is by reading what He has revealed in His word.

It is in the Bible that we learn of the origin of all that exists. It starts and ends with God. In the Bible we read of the creation of man and his rebellion against God. We also read about God's plan to redeem man. Through the pages of scripture we can read how God carefully worked His plan through the centuries until the time was right. Then, He stepped into His creation, showed Himself to man, died for man, and was raised for man. It is through His word that we learn what one must do to be saved. It is also in His word that we learn how to live in order to fulfill our purpose, and of the eternal home that He has prepared for those who love Him.

We started with Jeremiah, and it is there that we shall end. *"Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is."* (Jeremiah 37:17) We have God's word today, the Bible. Christianity is a religion of the Book. It contains God's truth and authority for our faith.