

The Creator Speaks



Week One: September 27–October 3

Read This Week's Passage: Genesis 3



Communication in Eden

inTro

Digital technology allows many of us to see friends and relatives in faraway places—a great blessing, to be sure, but how much better to meet in person! Something special happens when we get together, exchange hugs, and talk face-to-face.

Human beings were created to enjoy face-to-face friendship with God and one another. Genesis 1 and 2 tell the Creation story. God created a beautiful world, and in it He put Adam and Eve, the crowning act of Creation. Humans differ from every other creature on earth because we were made “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27), something said only about us and not, for example, the birds or animals. As such, we were to live wholistically abundant lives, experience love in all its forms, and walk in communion with God Himself.

We read in Genesis 2:18–23 that God created Eve for Adam because, God said, it was “not good that man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Right from the beginning,

humans were created as social beings. Sociologists today teach that human interaction provides numerous benefits to our physical and mental well-being, while loneliness is a killer. It's no wonder, then, that after the creation of Eve, Adam exclaimed, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23). The familial structure established by one man and one woman joined in matrimony is the first social institution God provided for humans in order for them to experience wholistic relationship and communion. It should come as no surprise that one of Satan's main goals has always been to destroy the fundamental dynamics of the family.

In their original home, Adam and Eve could meet with God and listen to His instructions. As stewards of God's wonderful garden, they grew in knowledge and skill as they cared for the flora and

fauna. Each day, they also had special time with God “in the cool of the day” (Gen. 3:8). The Sabbath day in particular, an essential part of God’s creative act, was a dedicated time of communion between God and His children (Gen. 2:2, 3; Exod. 20:8–11). On that day, our first parents experienced God’s love and care for them in a personal way.

Sin, however, disrupted the first family’s peace and damaged their intimate connection with God. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden and could no longer speak with God face-to-face. The prophet Isaiah wrote about this challenging human condition: “Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you” (Isa. 59:2).

In truth, Adam and Eve were still God’s children. However, the results of sin could not be avoided, and they had to leave Eden. Nothing was the same after their disobedience. Sin entirely changed human life in ways we cannot imagine, and that’s because all we know is a world of sin. Because of sin, the land was “cursed” and would produce “thorns and thistles” (Gen. 3:17, 18). Humans would now experience pain, and they would have to “sweat” in order to provide food for themselves, only to die and return to the ground (Gen. 3:19). Because of sin, people lost face-to-face communication with God.

To restore that communication and relationship with His beloved creatures, God has provided ways to speak to us. His most recognized form of divine interaction with us is through carefully chosen spokespersons, known as prophets, who reveal His messages to us. The prophets we know of often have writings in the Bible, but not always.

God’s ultimate plan is to restore His image in us—the image that sin has shattered. This is what the plan of salvation is about: a restoration that will be complete when God creates “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13). Until then, God still talks to us, and He still sometimes uses prophets to do so.



Make an outline or mind map of Genesis 3. Especially focus on verses 1–10, writing them out from the translation of your choice or rewriting them in your own words.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas.

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you.



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases.

What special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



Because God is love (1 John 4:8), He would never create human “robots.” Love embraces choice. To be able to love, Adam and Eve had to be created with free will. Otherwise, love—true love, would’ve been impossible for them to give. Thus Adam and Eve had the freedom to obey or disobey their Creator. The reality of this free choice was displayed in the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (see Gen. 2:15–17). Why warn them against eating from it unless they had the freedom to do so in the first place?

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels. . . . Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced.¹

Genesis 3 depicts an awful scene: the fall of Adam and Eve. After the conversation between the serpent (Satan) and Eve, our first parents were expressly tempted to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). Satan used the power of words, emotions, and pleasurable enticements to convince Eve, who then convinced Adam, to go against God’s command. Eve noted that the tree was “good for food,” “pleasant to the eyes,” and “desirable to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6). Satan’s promise that they would be

“like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5) sounded too good to pass up.

In reality, Satan’s discourse was riddled with errors. Satan also hid from them the consequences of their disobedience. After they disobeyed God, their eyes were immediately “opened,” and they saw that they were “naked” (Gen. 3:7). God’s “garment” of light and glory (Ps. 104:1, 2), which reflected the divine image, was gone. They were no longer covered by that which God had provided for them. Adam and Eve attempted to hide themselves from their Creator (as if it’s possible to hide from God), because sin makes us feel guilty and ashamed, and in our guilt, we want to flee from the presence of God.

Questions to explore:

What have you felt after doing something that wasn’t right? What were the consequences? How did your faith in God, and the promise of the gospel, keep you from giving up on faith entirely?

Why did Adam and Eve attempt to hide from their Creator after they disobeyed Him? Compare Gen. 3:1–8 with Jer. 23:24 and Heb. 4:13.

Journal your answers at the bottom of the previous page.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), 48, 49.



We can see from Genesis 3:9, 10 that God took the initiative to seek His fallen children. The question “Where are you?” was rhetorical, because God knew what Adam and Eve had done and where they were. Sin had cut off the usual communication that existed between Him and the first human couple. God’s immediate concern was to restore communication with His children, to meet with them, and to give them hope in their despair. In fact, the Hebrew verb *qara*, meaning “call,” in Genesis 3:9 is often used to describe God’s call to establish communication with His people.

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God’s seeking Adam and Eve reveals His unconditional love for His children. God never gives up on us. He goes to great lengths to reestablish communion with us, even when we go into hiding. Before Jesus’ crucifixion, when Peter denied Jesus three times, Christ “turned and looked” (Luke 22:61) at him. Even without words, He sought to reach and reconnect with His erring friend.

Notice in Genesis 3:11–13 how sin suddenly changed Adam’s and Eve’s relationships both with God and each other. Instead of confessing their sin,

they began to blame others. Adam blamed Eve, thus indirectly blaming God because God had given Eve to him: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen. 3:12). Eve, meanwhile, blamed the serpent for her disobedience: “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Gen. 3:13). Neither of them, at least when first confronted, owned up to their own guilt. How little we’ve changed in six thousand years.

The reality is that sin has affected all human beings. The apostle Paul described our condition well when he detailed the pain of desiring to do what’s right, only to find himself doing the opposite: “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (Rom. 7:15).

Who can’t relate? We are all broken people who keep doing things we know we should not do. Who hasn’t experienced this reality?

Our only hope is deliverance “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:25). This fact is why God continues to seek us. He wants desperately to lead us to Jesus, who alone can mold us into His perfect image and save us from the devastation caused by sin.

In your own life, how has God
come seeking after you?

Read Luke 15:11–32. How
does this parable reflect what
happened in Genesis 3:9, 10?

Memorize your favorite passage
from Genesis 3. Write it out multiple
times to help with memorization.



What do the following texts reveal about how God has spoken to humanity since the entrance of sin?

Nature:

Psalm 19:1–4

Romans 1:19, 20

Prophets and Scripture:

Numbers 12:6

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Most important of all:

John 14:7–9

John 10:27–30

Hebrews 1:1, 2

What other verses/promises help you understand how God speaks to humanity?

Review the passage you memorized from Genesis 3.



Despite sin, God found many ways to communicate with fallen human beings. One way God reveals Himself to us is through creation. Nature is a powerful revelation of His wonderful acts. Scientists are amazed by the wonders of our universe and at the complexity of even the “simplest” life. Yet nature also displays the consequences of the Fall, with the death of every living thing the most powerful example.

Another way God has spoken to humanity is through the prophets—individuals whom He chose as His spokespersons. For example, God spoke to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Daniel, revealing His will for His people. At their core, God’s prophetic messages are a reminder that He has not forgotten His children and is still with them.

Some prophets, such as Enoch, Nathan, Huldah, and John the Baptist, didn’t write any books of the Bible. Their messages were either intended for a certain time and place or were communicated by other Bible writers. However, the writings of many prophets are preserved in Scripture for our benefit (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The Bible is a revelation of God Himself. It’s through His words that we learn who He is, see His relentless love, and discover His instructions for how we’re to live. Moreover, it’s through the Bible that we understand who we are, where we came from, and where we’re going. There we find God’s purpose for our lives.

The most effective way God has spoken to us is through Jesus Christ, who, of course, is revealed to us in the Bible. As

God sought Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so Christ came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus declared, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Through His life, death, and resurrection, Christ fulfilled the promise given to Adam and Eve in Eden (Gen. 3:15). He came and died in our place so that we can enjoy both eternal life and restored communion with God.

Since Jesus’ ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit has continued to guide His people “into all the truth” and to speak to us of “what is yet to come” (John 16:13, NIV). One way He guides people into truth is by giving certain individuals messages from God for His people (2 Pet. 1:21), such as when He inspired the apostles with prophetic messages that were then written down and preserved in the books of the New Testament.

Questions to consider:

In what ways do you receive comfort, courage, or confidence from knowing that Jesus, through His love, character, and self-sacrifice, reveals what God the Father is really like?

Journal your responses and a personal prayer to God at the bottom of the previous page.



God's communication is not limited to biblical times. As we will see in the coming weeks, God speaks to human beings in perpetuity, and His words will be manifested in modern ways until Christ returns.

Ellen Gould Harmon White and her twin sister Elizabeth were born on November 26, 1827, in Gorham, Maine. They were the youngest of eight children born to Eunice and Robert Harmon. A few years later, the family moved to the city of Portland, Maine, where Robert hoped to expand his hat-making business. At age nine, while in a park near her home, an angry classmate threw a stone that struck Ellen in the face, leaving her in a semi-conscious state for several weeks. This accident abruptly ended her formal education and left her with lifelong health challenges. The facial injuries also left Ellen self-conscious about her appearance, limiting her social interactions.

In this context of uncertainty and struggle, the young Ellen Harmon began to think about her spiritual destiny. She was afraid of God and felt unworthy of heaven. Such fearful feelings intensified when the Harmon family began preparing for the Second Coming in accordance with Millerite teaching of Christ's soon return. Even after her baptism by immersion into the Methodist Church in 1842, Ellen did not feel worthy of God's love. She believed she was "forever lost."¹

Amid these agonizing thoughts, young Ellen had two dreams that began to

change her mind about God. However, it was not until her mid-teens when she met Levi Stockman, a Methodist preacher, that she understood and felt God's love and grace. It was as if God spoke directly to her in her despair. "Faith now took possession of my heart," she wrote later. "I felt an inexpressible love for God, and had the witness of His Spirit that my sins were pardoned. My views of the Father were changed. I now looked upon Him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out toward Him in a deep and fervent love."² At the same time, Ellen also understood the doctrine of the "state of the dead" and gradually grasped the idea that there was no forever-burning hell. Her new understanding of God and His love completely changed her mindset. As we will learn each Friday in the weeks to come, Ellen fell deeply in love with Jesus and served Him for the rest of her life.

To discover more, visit
www.WhiteEstate.org/ABSG/1.

1 Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (1915), 29. See also pp. 20–31.

2 White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, 39.

As we journey through this study, it's important to engage deeply with the material and reflect on its implications for our faith and daily lives. In your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group), use the outline of questions below to lead a thoughtful discussion based on this week's main passage and supporting verses.

Communication in Eden:

1. What kind of communication did God originally intend to have with us? Gen. 1:26; 2:18, 19
2. How did the serpent (Satan) undermine trust in God's communication with our first parents? Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1–6
3. How did God take the initiative to reestablish communication after Adam's and Eve's devastating decision? Gen. 3:8–13
4. How did Adam and Eve try to avoid God and avoid responsibility?

Personal reflection: *In your own life, how has God come seeking after you?*

God still speaks:

1. How does God speak through nature? Ps. 19:1–4; Rom. 1:19, 20
2. How has God spoken through prophets and Scripture? Num. 12:6; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
3. What's the most important way God has spoken on earth? John 14:7–9; Heb. 1:1, 2
4. After Jesus returned to heaven, who came to teach and guide us? John 16:13

Personal reflection: *How can we get better at hearing God's voice and discerning the Holy Spirit's guidance?*

Key takeaways to remember:

- Humans were created to enjoy face-to-face communion with God and one another.
- Sin disrupted open communication with God, but God initiated a plan to heal and restore.
- God speaks to people through nature, by sending messages through prophets, and most importantly, by sending Jesus into this world.