

387 God communicates

I hope I'm not misrepresenting the heritage in which I was (re)born, but as Bible-believing Christians, I reckon what we have always been taught is something like this:

God → Bible → [Truth about God] → Faith → Salvation

i.e. God communicates to us through the Bible, enabling us to know the truth about God; that encourages faith, leading to salvation, so we can then be part of God's family.

But isn't that model of God's communication more like this?

God → *People* → H/G Bible → *People* translate → *People* interpret → [Truth about God] → Faith → Salvation

That communication channel involves fallible people writing the Hebrew and Greek words; then, in order to work out the truth about God, people translate and interpret those H/G words for the likes of me. What's more, it's a circular process: in order to translate, you have to first interpret, and that very interpretation affects how you translate it. And every day I then read my English Bible (in my *favourite* version) and interpret it.

Let's look at this a different way:

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. ^{Heb 1:1,2}

Can you see the difference in focus? And how about this?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it. ^{Jn 1:1-5}

(I baulk sometimes when preachers refer to 'the Word of God', meaning the Bible, rather than Jesus the Messiah, who is THE Word of God.)

Anyway, as I said last time,^[386] we're so focused on *proving* things that we forget what this is all about: it's not about 'me and my salvation'; it's about God's incredible long-term plan to restore the whole of creation. So let me try again.

God is love → Love communicates → Restoration

and... Love is p(P)erson-to-p(P)erson communication

God created the universe, in love, and God wants to (and will!) restore the whole thing one day; we can be part of that, as God communicates with us in various ways, but mainly through Jesus, the Person.

Does that sound vague and wishy-washy? As I've read my Bible less as a Sadducee,^[386] I've noticed just how much focus there is on the Big Picture of The Resurrection; God is working his purpose out,¹ to bring heaven to earth, to restore all things, with Christ as Head.

Paul Bev. 17.7.25

^[1]As I typed those words, I thought of this hymn, so I looked up the words, just in case it was relevant. I think it does show a better focus (written in 1894) than I've had in 50 years.

1 God is working His purpose out,
as year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be:
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

2 From utmost east to utmost west,
where human feet have trod,
by the mouth of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God:
"Give ear to me, ye continents,
ye isles, give ear to me,
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea."

3 Let us go forth in the strength of God,
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth
may shine throughout the world.
Let us all fight with sorrow and sin
to set the captives free,
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

4 All we can do is nothing worth
unless God blesses the deed.
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
till God gives life to the seed.
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Interestingly, after I'd looked up 'God is working his purpose out', Google's AI then offered me other things I might want to know, and it was ALL about God's purpose for MY life, not about God's Ultimate Purpose. Try this for size:

Q: How does God work out his purpose?

A: God accomplished his plan through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. God applied his plan—he effectually called and justified us. And God will finish what he started—he will glorify us.

‘I rest my case, M'lud.’