

GOD SPEAKS IN YOUR LANGUAGE

Every parent has had the experience of trying to communicate to a wide-eyed four-year-old who asks a question like "Where do babies come from?" or "How does a spider make its web?" You know the child can't understand a scientific explanation. So you use words he can understand, and you give the best answer you can. You tell the truth (I hope!), but you accommodate the answer to the child.

That's like the "problem" God has in communicating to us. He is infinite and eternal; we are finite and mortal. He is perfect in holiness; we're cursed by sin. But in His love, God has accommodated His word—the Bible—to our minds and our ability to understand.

Therefore the Bible uses many analogies to explain things we otherwise couldn't grasp. Jesus said many times "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." and then told a story about farming, or about a wedding ceremony, or about relationships between people. He used things we know to explain things we don't know. That's an analogy. There's no way we can fully understand all the glory and perfection of Who God is, so He revealed Himself in terms we can understand. He tells us He is one God, eternally existing as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(Here's another *wonderful* big word you can use on your friends.) God also reveals Himself in *anthropomorphic* terms. That means "in the form of man." "*For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth*" (2 Chronicles 16:9) doesn't mean God sends little eyeballs running around the world. But it sends the clear message that God sees all that goes on. He used human terminology to accommodate His revelation to humans. Check out the majestic description of the glorified Jesus in Revelation 1:12-16 or Ezekiel's visions of God in Ezekiel 1:4-28 for examples of the writers of Scripture grabbing every word picture they could think of to describe a heavenly vision.

While your friends are still reeling from "anthropomorphic" rolling off your tongue, explain to them that God also uses *anthropopathic* expressions in His word. That means He reveals Himself to us in terms of human emotions. Genesis 6:6 says "*And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*" That doesn't mean God realized what a mistake He had made in creation—it is His way of telling us that our sin "breaks His heart."

Be glad (to use an anthropomorphism) God "stoops to our level."

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