



Scripture Story: John 1:1-18.

Commentary: *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 1.

the living message



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God—God’s thought made audible. . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which ‘angels desire to look,’ and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20).

keytext

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

(John 1:1, NIV)

what do you think?

What's your favorite way to get a message to someone?

- Phone
- E-mail or Facebook message
- MSN/chat
- Text message on my phone
- Handwritten note
- Face to face
- Through another person

did you know?

In the Phillips translation of the New Testament, the first verse of John 1 (today's *Key Text*) is translated as "At the beginning God expressed himself." That translation does a good job of capturing Jesus' special relationship to God and the reason He came to this planet. The Greek word for "Word" in John 1:1-3 is *logos*, which means "God's speech, God's message, what God has to say."

In other words, what God has to say to this planet was—Jesus. If we read the beginning of John 1 as the behind-the-scenes introduction to the whole story of Jesus, then we learn that Jesus was sent here for one specific purpose: to tell us what God is like. People have a lot of false and mistaken ideas about God, but we can point to the stories of Jesus in the Gospels and say, "This is what God is like! And this is what God has to say to us!"

INTO THE STORY

"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 understood it.

"There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . .

"From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

(John 1:1-18, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

If Jesus came to show the world what God is like, what can we say about the character of God based on the kind of person Jesus was? Try to come up with five or six words that describe God as revealed by Jesus.

Why do you think sending Jesus was God's best way of communicating with us? What other ways had He already tried? What other ways could He have tried?

What does it mean to say that Jesus "gives light to every man"? What about people who have never heard of Jesus, or rejected Him? Does He bring light to them too?

Why do you think "the world did not recognize Him"? If you had lived at Jesus' time, do you think you would have recognized Him as the Son of God? What stops people from recognizing Him today?

What does it mean to be "born of God"?

punch lines

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (**Isaiah 9:6, NIV**).

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (**Matthew 1:21, NIV**).

"The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord'" (**Luke 2:10, 11, NIV**).

"Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father'" (**John 14:8, 9, NIV**).

"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed" (**Luke 2:34, 35, NIV**).

other eyes

"He [Christ] is the self-expression of the Father—what the Father has to say. And there never was a time when He was not saying it."—C. S. Lewis, 20th-

century English scholar.

"Christ is the most perfect image of God, into which we are so renewed as to bear the image of God, in knowledge, purity, righteousness, and true holiness."—John Calvin, 16th-

century Swiss reformer.

makingitreal

Sabbath

The *Into the Story* passage from John 1 describes how Jesus came to be God's message to this world. John uses *metaphors* to describe Jesus (remember those from your English class?): Jesus is the Light. Jesus is the Life. Jesus is the Word.

What does each of those images tell us about Jesus?

Light _____
 Life _____
 Word _____

What other things can you think of that Jesus is compared to in the Bible? What do you think they tell us about Jesus? What else could you compare Jesus to? What does that comparison mean to you?

Sunday

Look back at the *What Do You Think?* portion of the lesson. What's your favorite way to send messages to people?

Sometimes how you send a message depends on what it contains. MSN may be great for chatting idly with friends, but if you want to say something that requires a lot of thought, you may want to compose an e-mail or a handwritten letter. Some people would rather break up over the phone because it's easier to hang up and walk away. Some of us find it easier to express deeply personal emotions in the written word, while others always prefer to speak face-to-face.

For God's ultimate message of love to His earthly creation, only one kind of "Logos" would do. God had already communicated for hundreds of years, speaking through prophets, Bible writers, and the Temple worship service. But no secondhand method would do for telling humanity that God loved them enough to die for them. Only God Himself in human form could do that.

What about your message back to God? How can you communicate that to Him?

Monday

What does the life of Jesus tell us about who God is and how God thinks and feels about us?

Think of three stories from Jesus' life that you know and like. Write a very brief summary of each in the boxes below (see example). Then, for each one write what you think that tells us about God.

Jesus feeds 5,000 people.			
God can do a lot with a little.			
God is concerned.			

Tuesday

According to the *Flashlight* passage from *The Desire of Ages*, Jesus came to earth not just to demonstrate God's love to people on this planet, but to those watching on other, unfallen worlds. Imagine you are a sinless alien watching the drama unfold as God the Son comes to earth as a human being. What do you think your reactions might be? What conclusions would you draw about God?

Wednesday

Read the verses in the *Punch Lines* section of the lesson. What can you learn from each of these verses about Jesus' purpose in coming to earth?

Isaiah 9:6 _____
 Matthew 1:21 _____
 Luke 2:10, 11 _____

Luke 2:34, 35 _____
 John 14:8, 9 _____

Thursday

Jesus came to show people what God is like. But when Jesus returned to heaven, His work here wasn't finished. He left His people—His church—behind to continue showing the world what God was like.

As Christians, we don't always do the greatest job of that. But it's sobering to reflect that "your life may be the only Bible some people will ever read." What's one practical thing you can do today that will help someone else see what the God you worship is like?

Friday

As you think about Jesus' coming to earth and what that reveals to us about God, what is your response? Write a short letter-prayer reflecting your feelings. Use the sentence starters below if they help.

Dear God,
When I think about Jesus coming to earth to show us what You are like, it makes me feel

 I want to tell You that _____

Because of Jesus, I think You are _____

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages, chapter 1.

*By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.