CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JANUARY022021

Scripture Story: John 1:1-18.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 1.

the living message



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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)

CCBSG YB Q1 2021.indd 5 7/28/20 4:40 PM

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

Why do you prefer this method of sending a message?

_____
_____
_____

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 in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became 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. . . .

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

(John 1:1-18)



CCBSG YB Q1 2021.indd 6 7/28/20 4:40 PM

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 life Jesus lived? 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 know 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 unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" **(Isaiah 9:6).**

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" **(Matthew 1:21).**

"Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord'" **(Luke 2:10, 11).**

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"?'" **(John 14:8, 9).**

"Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed'" **(Luke 2:34, 35).**

further insight

"God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 25).

"Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 26).

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read John 1.

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged" (Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, God the Son).

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. 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 else could you compare Jesus to? What does that comparison mean to you?

Sunday

Read Romans 5:8.

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 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

Read John 3:16.

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

Read John 1:14.

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 angel 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 _____

John 14:8, 9 _____

Thursday

Read Matthew 28:19.

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

Read Isaiah 6:8.

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 _____

_____

_____.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 1.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

CCBSG YB Q1 2021.indd 8 7/28/20 4:40 PM