

MESSIAH

A contemporary adaptation of the classic work on Jesus' life

The Desire of Ages

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GOD BECOMES ONE OF US

*“They will name him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us’ ”
(Matthew 1:23).*

From the days of eternity, Jesus has been with His Father. They are both God. Both are full of glory and majesty greater than anything we can imagine. Jesus came to our world to show and to share that glory. He came to our dark, sinful planet to shine the light of divine love—to be “God with us.” That’s why the Bible writer said, “They will call him Immanuel.”

Jesus came to this earth to show both humans and angels what God is really like. In fact, He was the word of God—God’s thoughts spoken out loud, so we can hear them.

It wasn’t just for His children on this planet that Jesus became a human being and demonstrated God’s love. He did it for all created beings. Our world is now the textbook of the whole universe.

The purpose behind God’s grace, the mystery of a love deep enough to save lost humans, will be studied by angels forever. Those who are saved, plus the beings from unfallen worlds will also sing about and study Jesus’ life and death. They will find the glory that shines from Jesus’ face is the glory of selfless love. Jesus’ sacrifice on Calvary shows that the law of selfless love is the law of life for earth

and heaven. This selfless love comes straight from the heart of God.

In the beginning, nature reflected God like a mirror. Jesus Himself rolled out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth. With His own hands, He hung the worlds in space and fashioned the flowers of the field. He filled the earth with beauty and the sky with song. Upon all these things, He wrote the message of His Father's love.

Today sin has spoiled God's perfect creation. But the handwriting of God's love is still there. Even now, all created things—except for selfish humans—reflect in some way God's law of love. Every bird that takes flight, every animal that moves and breathes, has a part in helping other creatures survive. Even the leaves and blades of grass have their ministry. The oxygen they give supports all living creatures. Animals return to them the carbon dioxide they need to grow and survive.

All of nature lives to give. Flowers share their fragrance and beauty. The sun gives its life-sustaining light. The ocean, source of all water on earth, returns the water it is fed by rivers and streams in the rain and snow that fall on the earth.

In the same way, angels find their joy in giving. With great love, they watch over weak and sinful humans. Into this dark world, they bring the light of heaven; with gentle patience, they work to show humans the love of God and bring them into a relationship with Jesus.

In Jesus we see God most clearly. He shows us without doubt that His Father's greatest joy—His greatest glory—is to give. God's life flows out to the universe in His ministry for all created beings. It flows out through His beloved Son, and through His Son it returns in praise and joyful service. It becomes a great wave of love, flowing back to the Source of life. Through Jesus, the circle of life and love is complete.

SELFISHNESS IN HEAVEN

The law of selfless love was broken in heaven itself. Sin began as selfishness. Lucifer, the brightest and mightiest angel, wanted more. He wanted to be the most important being in heaven. He tried to gain control of the other angels by breaking their loyalty to God. He wanted the angels looking at him.

He began implying that God was demanding worship and loyalty. He painted God as a self-centered dictator who tolerated no questions and no doubts. With these suggestions, Satan deceived the angels. With the same ideas, he would deceive humans. He led them to doubt God's word and to question His goodness. He tricked them into seeing a God of justice and awesome majesty as cruel and unforgiving. By misrepresenting God's character, Satan pulled humans into his rebellion. The long dark night of earth's history began.

*In Jesus,
we see God
most
clearly of
all.*

The only way to lighten the shadows was to show that Satan's description of God was wrong. This couldn't be done by force. Force has no place in God's plans. He wants only a response of love, and love does not happen on demand. Love cannot be forced or ordered of anyone. Love is returned only when love is offered.

To know God is to love Him. So the way to lead humans back to God was to show humans what God was really like. This could be done by only one Being in the universe. Only Jesus, who knew the limitless love of His Father, could make that love clear to all others.

The plan to save humans was not an afterthought. It was in place before Adam and Eve sinned. The plan was a natural result of the the law of selfless love. God's throne and the operation of the universe was founded on this principle. From eternity, God and Jesus knew of Lucifer's fall and that his lies would lead humans to rebel also.

God didn't create sin. He did not want it to exist. But He knew that it would happen and made a plan to deal with that most critical emergency. His plan revealed the great love He had for this world and humanity. He promised to give His one and only Son, " ' . . . that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life' " (John 3:16).

Satan in his selfishness wanted to be more important, more honored. He wanted to become a god. Jesus, in His selfless love, did not care about glory or honor. He became a human being.

A VOLUNTEER FOR THE SACRIFICE

Jesus volunteered to make this sacrifice. He could have stayed at His Father's side in the glory of heaven, worshipped and honored by the angels. Instead He chose to step down from the throne of the universe to bring light and life to a dark world.

Two thousand years ago in heaven, Jesus announced fulfillment of the plan that had been hidden from eternity. " 'You do not want sacrifices and offerings, but you have prepared a body for me.... "Look, I have come. It is written about me in the book. God, I have come to do what you want." ' " (Hebrews 10:5, 7). Jesus was ready to / TJ T* [(w) -4 (i) thsin the manc4 (a)-1 (f)-7 (u)4 (a)-1 8ryHcommandrthsto10 ()-29 (b)2

As a human, He faced temptations with the strength given to Him by God. He went about doing good and healing those who suffered. He showed the truth about God's law and what it means to serve God. Jesus' life proves that it is possible for us also to obey God's law.

*Jesus bound
Himself to
humanity with
a tie that
will never be
broken.*

By His humanity, Jesus reached humans. By His divinity, He kept hold on the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of living by God's law. As the Son of God, He gives us the power to do the same. He is our Guarantee that sin can be overcome. Through His power, heaven's laws can be obeyed.

Jesus gave up honor and glory to become a human. He showed that His character is just the opposite of Satan's. But Jesus went even further. He didn't just become a human. He became a sacrifice to save humans.

TREATED AS WE DESERVE

Jesus was treated as we deserve to be, so that we can be treated the way He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, which He had nothing to do with. This was so we can be saved by His righteous goodness, which we have nothing to do with. He suffered our death, so that we can be given His life. "We are healed because of his wounds" (Isaiah 53:5).

With His life and His death, Jesus did more than just restore the damage caused by sin. Satan tried to separate humankind from God forever. But because of Jesus, we are more closely tied to God than if we had never fallen into sin. By becoming one of us, Jesus bound Himself to humanity with a tie that will never be broken.

When God "so loved the world" that He gave His Son, He gave that Son to humanity forever. God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son. Through Him, God carried that nature into heaven.

It is the “Son of humanity” who shares the throne of the universe. In Jesus, the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. He is our Brother.

Through the work of Jesus, God’s rulership over the universe stands justified. The all-knowing God is shown to be the God of unending love. Satan’s accusations are proven false, and his evil character becomes obvious to all. Rebellion against God can never rise again. Sin can never again arise anywhere in the universe. All beings everywhere are safe. By love’s self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of heaven and earth are bound to their Creator in bonds that can never be broken.

The work of saving the lost will be complete. Where sin seemed to be so powerful, God’s grace was much more powerful. The planet on which the battle was fought will be given a place of honor above all others. Earth where the King of glory lived and suffered and died, will be made new. Here God Himself will live with His people.

Through time that never ends, the saved will walk in the light of their Lord. They will praise Him for His gift of love beyond understanding—Immanuel, “God with us.”