

“The word became flesh and dwelt among us” John chapter 1 verse 14

Most people, if they think about God at all, think of him as a detached, authoritarian figure looking in stern disapproval on a sinful world. Alternatively, others may insist that he is a God of love, but the kind of love that never calls anyone or anything to account. There are many who refer to him fondly as a friend who looks on with benign affection on their bad habits, character flaws and self-indulgence. Nevertheless, he is almost always seen as a mystery, inaccessible to us on any meaningful level and in any case, far too busy with the task of running the universe to be interested in our individual lives.

But the bible is very clear that God is a person – that is, he has a personality and is not just an unconscious, impersonal force. And, as such, he is portrayed in the bible as a being who, despite being all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere present, habitually communicates with people. This shouldn't be surprising. He created people for relationship with him, in order that we should co-operate with him in his plan and purpose for human history. What relationship, and what co-operative endeavour ever worked without communication?

John begins his gospel by speaking of a figure he calls “The Word” who, he states, “was with God” and “was God” in the beginning of creation. He seems to be saying that “The Word” is an expression of the person of God himself. The name carries the firm implication that God is a God who speaks.

But then he says “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” And he goes on to say that this is not merely some theological speculation, but something he and others have witnessed; “We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The world shaking significance of these words cannot be overstated. Our world has made God in its own image and “brought him into line”. What they have ended up with is not God at all. If we really appreciated the almighty power and majesty of God, then we would be shocked at the idea that he would come to earth to share our mortal existence in human form. Who has ever heard of any supposed “god” so determined to make himself known to people that he would become one of them, even to the extent of submitting to a human birth and a human death?

But it is true. In Jesus, God reveals himself in a form that we can relate to. The New Testament tells us that “All the fullness of the deity (God) was contained in Jesus in human form” and “He is the image of the invisible God.” Because of Jesus, we do not have to guess, or speculate, or theorise any more about what God might be like, or about what his attitude towards us might be. At the beginning of his earthly life and at the end of it, he made himself vulnerable to us, a helpless baby in a manger at first and an equally helpless innocent victim of execution on a cross at the end.

At his birth, some came to worship him, but others tried to get rid of him. At his death, some turned to him in faith, but others mocked him. At Christmas, we get to eavesdrop on his birth once again. How will you respond to him this year?

Prayer.

Father, this Christmas the greatest thing that we can do is to say thank you for sending Jesus. Though he seems to be just a helpless child, he is the one who was at your side at

the creation of the world. Humble our pride, so that we might kneel in worship before him. Open our hearts to see the salvation that he brings. Grant us the faith to welcome him into our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*