

Week 5  
Home Page Summaries, Days 2-5

Day 2

God's Identity

The Fullness of God

What would you say is the central truth of Christianity? What is that sets the Christian faith apart from all other religions? The Apostle Paul addressed this issue in Colossians 2:9-10 (p. xxx). Not only did he want to clarify this doctrinal matter for the believers at Colosse, he wanted them to know how this truth impacts their own spiritual lives.

Day 3

My Identity

1 Timothy 2:5

Everyone experiences conflicts of one kind or other. But sadly, most people don't even know about the biggest conflict of their life; one that every human experiences. First Timothy 2:5 (p. xxx) reveals what God did to resolve that biggest of all personal conflicts. When you see the solution, you'll immediately recognize the conflict.

Day 4

Impact

Luke 4:1-13

Everyone loves a good drama. Novels, plays, movies, opera—there are many great opportunities to get emotionally involved in a suspenseful tale. One short supercedes all others in terms of dramatic import story (and it's actually true!). You've probably read it without recognizing its dramatic tension. Luke records it in Luke 4:1-13 (p. xxx).

Day 5

Implication

Hebrews 1:3

Hardly any television broadcasts in recent years have exceeded in viewership those concerning the British royal family. People are fascinated with royalty, so much so that the true purposes of royalty are often overlooked. Hebrews 1:3 (p. xxx) reminds us of the purpose for which the Servant-King, Jesus, came to earth.

Week 5, Day 1  
John 1:1-18  
345 words

The Promise  
The Word That Is Alive

John 1:1-18 Imagine the boldness needed for a simple person to walk onto the campus of say, Harvard University, and announce, “I know something that you don’t know.” That person would be greeted with scorn at worst, and skepticism at best. It just doesn’t make sense that someone unknown could bring something new to a group of people who profess to know it all (or most of it, anyway).

Paul the Apostle had this experience in the city of Athens. In the highly-charged religious environment of the Mediterranean world, rife with the presence of Greek and Roman gods, Paul announced that the true God had come to earth (Acts 17:16-34). To tell this to a group of religious Greek philosophers was tantamount to calling them “uninformed.” By doing so, Paul gained their attention and proceeded to tell them about Jesus, the *logos* of God, who had become the living Word of God.

To Greeks, the *logos* (word) was not a person. It was either the spoken word or, more importantly, the word of the mind, or the reason. And at a universal level, it was the reason that governed the universe and all that is in it. They prided themselves on possessing, and pursuing, the *logos*. For Jews, the *logos* was the word spoken by the prophets of God. For neither—Greek nor Jew—was the *logos* a person. Never had the “reason of the gods” for the Greeks or the “word of the Lord” for the Jews been perceived as a person. Paul, and later John the Apostle in John 1, knew and told something that had not been known or told before. One, the Word of God *is* God. Second, the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among men. Third, Jesus of Nazareth is that living Word of God.

You now know something that not everyone knows, and hopefully are like some to whom Paul spoke who embraced Christ (Acts 17:32-34). You are holding the written word of God in your hands; are you also holding the hand of the living Word of God?

God’s Promise to You: “To obey my word is to obey my Son.”

Week 5, Day 2  
Colossians 2:9-10  
351 words

## God's Identity The Fullness of God

Colossians 2:9-10 When he wrote the letter to the church at Colosse in Asia Minor, the Apostle Paul was addressing a destructive Judeo-Gnostic heresy that was infiltrating and weakening the church. Though he doesn't define the heresy in his letter, it is easy to see from his emphases the errors which he was correcting. And one of the points where the Colossian Christians had fallen into error was over THE point of Christianity: who Jesus Christ is. The declarative truth which Paul states becomes a promise for every believer: Jesus Christ is the embodiment and fullness of Deity.

Apparently (like today), religious leaders in Paul's day were teaching that Christ was not God. It is very easy to hold Christ in high regard (as did the Gnostics, and as do the Moslems and even many pseudo-Christian cults of our day) without confessing him as God in the flesh. Have you heard that point of view today? Perhaps you have been well into a conversation with a person whom you assumed was a Christian when you discover that they equate Jesus with Paul and the other great "leaders" of Christianity, or even with Buddha or Mohammed or "founders" of other faiths. Does this really matter? According to Paul, very much so. For if Christ is not truly the Living Word of God, then he cannot speak for God. His words to us bear no more import than the words of any other religious leader. And if this is true, then the second part of Paul's statement becomes even more meaningless.

Not only is Christ the fullness of the Deity in bodily form, Paul promises that believers have been given spiritual fullness in Christ—that he is above every other power and authority (including, by implication, the Gnostic teachers). But if Christ's word in us is not the word of God in us, then we have received only the word of a wise man, not the word of God. Have you received Christ? Have you believed his word? Then you have believed and received the very life of God himself, for Jesus Christ is God.

God's Promise to You: "Receiving Christ is receiving me."

Week 5, Day 3

1 Timothy 2:5

348 words

My Identity

Who Needs a Mediator?

1 Timothy 2:5 Stop John or Jane Doe on the street of any town in the world and ask this question: “What is the biggest conflict in your life that needs resolving?” And then hope your tape recorder doesn’t run out of batteries. While a multitude of conflicts will be described, one that will likely not be mentioned is conflict with God—and for understandable reasons. Those persons who are already believers in Christ no longer have a conflict with God, and it probably hasn’t occurred to those who aren’t believers that they and God are in conflict!

But Biblical truth be told, the initial identity of every human being who has ever lived is “Person In Conflict With God.” Just as the major news networks flash a logo on the screen—“Crisis In (Name that Country)” —so there could be a non-stop logo flashing across televisions that say, “Crisis Between Heaven and Earth.” Outside of Jesus Christ, we are persons in conflict. While this may sound like bad news, it is simply that part of the gospel message that makes the good news good. (A new village fire truck is news. It becomes good news—great news—when a house is burning.) And the good news in our case is that God has provided a mediator for our conflict.

When companies and labor unions are in conflict, a judge sends a mediator to stand between the parties and work out a solution. The mediator has to provide a solution which satisfies both parties in the conflict and reestablishes the broken relationship. That is what happened when God sent Jesus Christ to be the mediator between himself and sinners. God was satisfied (the penalty for sin was paid through Christ’s death) and mankind was satisfied (we were granted access to God’s kingdom).

If you are a Christian, at some point you recognized you were in conflict with God because of sin. If you are not yet a Christian, perhaps seeing Christ as a mediator, a bridge, between you and God will help you see the conflict—and how to resolve it.

God’s Promise to You: “The only one who can bring you and me together is my Son.”

Week 5, Day 4

Luke 4:1-13

351 words

Impact

True Drama

Luke 4:1-13 What kind of drama do you enjoy? A spine-tingling nail-biter that keeps you awake half the night? How about a white-knuckle espionage spy thriller? Or perhaps you prefer a nineteenth-century love story filled with eloquence and intrigue. Well, it takes all kinds—and all are enjoyable. But perhaps the greatest drama ever written was penned by a doctor who lived in the first century AD. Because it's not fiction, it will never be nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. But when it comes to drama of the highest order, the story of the temptation of Christ is unparalleled.

With only 250 words and two characters, the potential for drama would seem slim. It is the plot that is the clincher. For the first thirty years of Jesus' life, Satan has remained on the sidelines. But as Jesus begins his public ministry, the antagonist comes to the fore. Several thousand years earlier, Satan had been successful in causing the downfall of the only other sinless people to walk the planet—a couple named Adam and Eve. Now another sinless One—a second Adam—has come on a mission to restore Adam's fallen race. Jesus, the living Word, has come to present the words and works of God to the sons and daughters of Adam in order to lead them back to God. Hanging in the balance is the salvation of the human race. There is no understudy in this drama. Should Jesus fail and yield to the wiles of the devil, humanity is doomed.

Three times Satan offers the second Adam enticements, and three times the living Word of God answers with the written word of God. His life and God's word are one; who he is and what he says demonstrate the will of God. And the battle is won! The second Adam has gained back what the first Adam lost.

Did you realize that your spiritual destiny hung in the balance in a Judean desert 2,000 years ago? Next time you pray, offer a word of thanks to Jesus for being the leading Man in the greatest drama ever played out.

God's Promise to You: "The word of God, written and living, is the key to spiritual victory."

Week 5, Day 5

Hebrews 1:3

357 words

Implication

Why the King Came

Hebrews 1:3 Does any realm on earth know how to display the pomp and ceremony of royalty like the British? Pageantry and performance ooze from every pore of that island nation. The traditions of rule by monarch, maintained for centuries, still are practiced, though primarily for ceremonial purposes. There are royal jewels, royal castles, royal protocols, and royal traffic jams caused by the movements of the monarch. But no one minds, especially the rest of the world. Countries without a royal family to watch and envy seem to live vicariously through England's.

Often, what a monarch *does* gets lost amid the fanfare of who the monarch *is*. There is a danger in viewing the royal leader and his or her entourage as entertainment for the people rather than as expeditors of policy. And this can be true in the spiritual realm as well. Take the coming to earth of God's living Word, Jesus Christ. He came for a purpose, to be sure. But his coming from earth to heaven, and his dramatic resurrection and ascension from earth back to heaven, sometimes overshadow the simplicity and purity of what he came to do.

Take Hebrews 1:3 for example. Is this not a description of royalty? Jesus radiates God's glory and represents him exactly. He sustains God's kingdom by his powerful and authoritative word. And that was just the preparation for his coming. When he returned to heaven he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. An entrance and exit fit for a king! But as we sometimes do while watching the British royalty, let us not forget the purpose of his coming. The living Word of God came to provide "purification for sins." Bookends of eternity support the tiny three-year window in which Christ came to earth to make his subjects pure—pure now and pure forever.

If I miss his death for me, I miss the purpose of his appearance. Coming as he did as a humble servant-king, many royalty watchers have failed to see his true glory. May the purity which he provides reflect his glory through us to those who have yet to see him.

God's Promise to You: "My son came to earth to purify you from the stain of sin."