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That passage says it all. If you were to condense all of the Holy Scriptures to just a few verses, this is it.

The prologue of John is a love song of Good News from God to the world as heard and understood by John, welcoming all who hear to join in the light of God's love – to mirror God's light through our creative endeavors, through the enjoyment of creation, and through relationship with all the others who bear the light of God.

In these few verses, John foreshadows the inevitable reality that while we will reject God time and again, God's light (that light which enlightens everyone, he says) is embedded in our very DNA and will overcome the darkness of our fear, our doubt, our hurt. God's Word of truth and life and light and grace declares us whole and beautiful and righteous and loved. So very loved.

Like any good poet, John is particular about each word he writes. He always chooses terms that are loaded in layers of meaning and which paint powerful images. Even the cadence of his writing communicates his intention to draw the reader in, to lift us up, challenge us, and create a sense of wonder and awe at the glory of God.

Of all of his writings (this Gospel, the Revelation, his letters), I love this passage the most. What fascinates me, what grabs my attention every time I hear it, is the middle phrase of that first verse: the Word was with God. The translation of that preposition (in my humble opinion) is inadequate to John's intention. His nuance is lost.

The Greek word that is translated "with" is *πρὸς*. It can also be translated as '*unto*', '*among*', or '*toward*'.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **unto** God, **among** God, **toward** God, and the Word was God.

So God's Word was not simply co-existent in character, but rather reflexive: outward in action, and received in function. And so it must be that the *Λόγος*, the Word, was produced from the longing of God's own heart unto God's own self.

That awareness humbles me every time I think about it. God longed for interaction and relationship with someone Other. God longed to create, to live, to love. And so God spoke. 'The Word became flesh and lived among us.' All creation came into being through this Word even as the Word came to dwell among creation. Each one of us was created because each one of us was longed for ~ to continue the work of creation unto God, to live among God, and to love toward God. And each of us experiences those same longings as well: to create, to live, and to love. All outward in action, but received in function.

John assures us that God breaches the barrier between creation and the Creator, and that the One who is fully God and fully human invites us to recognize the light which abides within each of us. As John put it, we are called to the Truth that we are born of God, for God, and thereby recipients of grace upon grace.

As far as love songs go, John wrote a great one. If you were to write a love song about God's love, what words and images might you use? How might you tell the story of the Incarnation and communicate its impact on your life?

To get your creative juices flowing, I'll share with you a poem by Dr. Maya Angelou who shared this at the lighting of the White House Christmas tree in 2005. (For those of you who would like a copy, I have printed some and can give it to you after the service.)

Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem

By Dr. Maya Angelou

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche
Over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.
What have we done to so affront nature?
We worry God.
Are you there? Are you there really?
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,
Come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season.
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner.
Flood waters recede into memory.
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things,
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.
We hear a sweetness.
The word is Peace.
It is loud now. It is louder.
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.
It is what we have hungered for.
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.
Peace.
Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,
Implore you, to stay a while with us.
So we may learn by your shimmering light
How to look beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language
To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ
Into the great religions of the world.
We jubilate the precious advent of trust.
We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope.
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers,
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.

Peace, My Brother.
Peace, My Sister.
Peace, My Soul.

John's love song clearly shaped her work - God so loved the world that God's Word became flesh so that God could abide among us as one of us, and could be the Word with which we can "translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other." [1]

Thank God that the Word was spoken outward into being, and we get to be the recipient of God's affection. Thank God that we have been given the gift of life so that God can rejoice in relationship with us. Thank God that the Incarnate Word came to be among us to show us who we really are. Thank God that when we stray from ourselves, the light of God's Word continues to abide in our hearts regardless of whether we acknowledge it or not. Thank God that God rejoices in us even when we're a pain in the tookus. Thank God we can wrestle, we can doubt, we can deny ... and we can create, we can live, we can love. Thank God that we are invited to step out of the chaos of our own creation and into the promise of God's ordered Reality. Thank God. All of that because of a Word spoken: a Word that was a promise made, and a promise kept.

[1] Maya Angelou, "Amazing Peace"