

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

April 12, 2018

My dear Friends:

The last few weeks, you've seen me via video rather than read a letter from me. But I thought it'd be good to go back to this older form of communication. It is striking how important writing and words and letters are, especially today. Think about what happens when you receive a hand-written note, not just a thank you note (although that's nice too), but a card or letter out of the blue, perhaps from someone from whom you've not heard in a while. How good that is! How thoughtful we deem it!

In older days, writing letters was the main way of communication. I just finished reading the letters of J. R. R. Tolkien. It was striking to me that he took time to answer fan mail and the questions they asked, sometimes in great detail. It was also poignant to read how he wished he could see his sons, especially Christopher, who was a soul mate for him; but the letters were the best he could do.

Of course, writing and words and letters are important to God as well. Nearly half of the contents of the New Testament are letters, written in the first-century form that would've been expected at that time. Could we do without Paul's letter to the Romans or to the Galatians? Without James's or Peter's or John's letters? I think not. But even more, when you think about the Bible itself, what is it? Writing, words. Why did God communicate that way? Would not a video, a movie, a play, a painting have been better? Why does he communicate with words? For that matter, why does he allow himself to be called the Word (John 1:1-14)?

I think there is a reason why God didn't communicate through images, but through words and writings. He made an image—that's you and me; we are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-28). And his authoritative, perfect image is Jesus, the Word of God (Heb 1:3). And so, his intention is for us to be his video, movie, play, painting. But how do we know the script? What are our lines? How might we know him and his direction? That's where God's writings come in—the Bible's words and writings, letters and histories, songs and stories serve to form and inform how we image forth God. These sacred words, writings, and letters communicate God's thoughts across times and lands to us.

But these writings also serve to remind us again and again that God loves us. He takes time to communicate to us; he reveals himself to us in a way that is more profound than any image could ever do. Because in this book that we call the Bible, we have the very Word of God in the words of God. And that's the very best he could do—thanks be to God for his Word!

In the grip of God's grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean".

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