

From the beginning God created man out of His own generosity. He chose the patriarchs to give them salvation. He took His people in hand, teaching them, unteachable as they were, to follow Him. He gave them prophets, accustoming man to bear His Spirit and to have communion with God on earth. He who stands in need of no one gave communion with Himself to those who need Him. Like an architect He outlined the plan of salvation to those who sought to please Him. By His own hand He gave food in Egypt to those who did not see Him. To those who were restless in the desert He gave a law perfectly suited to them. To those who entered the land of prosperity He gave a worthy inheritance. He killed the fatted calf for those who turned to Him as Father, and clothed them with the finest garment. In so many ways He was training the human race to take part in the harmonious song of salvation.

St Irenaeus "Against the Heresies"

Our faith is not founded upon empty words; nor are we carried away by mere caprice or beguiled by specious arguments. On the contrary, we put our faith in words spoken by the power of God, spoken by the Word Himself at God's command. God wished to win men back from disobedience, not by using force to reduce him to slavery, but by addressing to his free will a call to liberty.

The Word spoke first of all through the prophets, but because the message was couched in such obscure language that it could be only dimly apprehended, in the last days the Father sent the Word in person, commanding Him to show Himself openly so that the world could see Him and be saved.

St Hippolytus "On the Refutation of All Heresies"