

D) The Word became flesh (Jesus Christ) and "dwelt" with mankind. The word "dwelt" (ἐσκήνωσεν/σκηνώω) literally rendered means "to pitch one's tent with, to tabernacle (tent) with another" It is a direct word-picture of God coming to dwell with mankind and would have drawn on the vivid stories from the Old Testament about the Tabernacle and God's presence.

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) God's story begins in Genesis and is reintroduced here in the book of John. It comes to an eventual thunderous climax at the end of Revelation (also written by John). Somewhere in the middle of those pages, God is writing another story -- **YOURS!** Share your story or what God has done in you up to this point. There may be a lot, or maybe just a little -- but God is always at work! Be sure to ask great questions of those who are sharing. Discover what God has been doing in the lives of your friends!
- B) In the beginning of John, the concepts of Light and Darkness are introduced. Do you see these at work in the world around us? What about in your family, at work or in your children?
- C) Why did God choose to come "in the flesh?" Discuss in your group why you think God chose to give people "the right to become children of God."
- D) What does it mean (in John 1:13), to be born of God?
- E) Is there some part of your life where the darkness has taken what God meant for the Light? Share one area of your life that you could use some prayer and follow-up from your group this week!

In The Beginning...

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BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, *EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME, WHO WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD.*
~JOHN 1:12-13 (NASB)

1) In The Beginning...

- A) The phrase "in the beginning" (John 1:1) immediately brings to mind the Genesis 1:1 prologue to the creation story. John, the son of Zebedee (our author), is also introducing us to a power-packed introduction (John 1:1-18) to his gospel account which will serve to redefine what has been in existence from the beginning.
- An ancient story
 - A modern perspective
 - A future impact
- B) John establishes five distinct and significant realities in his first few verses.
1. That the person who is The Word existed "in the beginning." Specifically, "before time began." The "Word"

is presented by John as a personal character, not just an idea or concept. In this, John extends the meaning of logos (λόγος) to represent the dynamic "fleshing out" of who God is (v. 1).

2. The person who is The Word was present with God in the beginning (vss. 1-2).
3. The person who is The Word is divine. The Word is, in every essence, God Himself (v. 1). While different in function, they are the same in essence*.
4. All things which were created came into being through the person who is The Word (vss. 3, 10).
5. The person who is The Word is Jesus Christ (v. 14).

2) Theologically Significant Introductions

A) John introduces the theme of "light" into his poetic prologue in verses 4-5. The light is presented as life giving, but is not comprehended (NIV -- understood). This word has tremendous importance for the understanding of John's Gospel message.

- "Comprehended" ~ katélaben (κατέλαβεν) is best rendered "to lay hold of something, to grasp

* John 1:1 has become a very popular verse due, in large part, because of the misinterpretation of the verse by the Jehovah's Witness cult group ("was a god" at the end of the verse). The reason for this translation is the absence of a definite article (an English "the") in front of God in the original Greek text (καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος). However, in Greek, when nouns possessing the definite article are in a predicate position, the following identical noun does not require the definite article in order to be definite. Other examples of this rule (known as "Caldwell's Rule") from the context of this passage are found in verses 6 (from God); 12 (of God); 13 (of God); and 18 (seen God).

with the mind **AND** to seize with the hand by force or hostility." It carries with it the idea that the darkness of verse 5 is attempting to "comprehend" the Light in order to "apprehend" it -- by force and hostility.

- B) John introduces the character of John the Baptist in verses 6-8. He notes that John came to witness and testify about the Light, but that he was not the Light. John (the author) sets the stage for a motif of "replacements" to occur. The Light has come to **replace or complete** what has been missing.
- C) Verses 9-10 mention the "world" four times. The world (cosmos/κόσμον-ς) is a theologically significant word in John's gospel. Whenever you read it, it is not **just** referring to the world we live in, but more significantly, to the world which is in darkness and hostility toward God (cf. 3:19). It is the "world" which is in dark opposition to Jesus Christ. It is a very negative term in John's gospel.

3) The Reason For John's Gospel

- A) Jesus came into the world, but His own people (the Jews) rejected Him (v. 11).
- B) Now God is extending grace upon grace (v. 16) to the rest of us by giving us the "right to become children of God" (v. 12). Let's never forget that it is God who has done this for us, and it is based on grace alone -- it is the pure gift of God through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- C) There is a human responsibility to respond to God's graciousness by "receiving" and "believing" in the name of Jesus Christ and becoming "born of God" (vss. 12-13).