



## ***That you may believe...*** **Leaders Guide for Week 1**

**(Times are approximate)** – start time: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Welcome**

- If you are a new or experienced leader, we recommend you read the attachment containing helpful hints for leading a group.
- If you are a new group, you may want to spend a few minutes having people share about themselves.
- You set the example by keeping your sharing to about 30 seconds (name, family members, how long attending, looking forward to this study, etc.).

(+10 min – add this time to the start time – we recommend you place time stamps in the margin just as a marker to help you keep on track)

### **Opening prayer**

- Everyone has their own method of praying however, if praying before a group is new for you, you might follow the example of the Lord's prayer
- Another method is this three step approach: *praise God first* (identify an attribute of Him), *thank Him* for His Holy inerrant Word and people in the group, *petition Him* to guide the time together, that the Holy Spirit will teach/reveal something to everyone – this is just an example.
- Prayers should be brief and to the point(s) you feel led to cover.

(+2 min – add this time to the previous time and do this throughout the rest of the document)

(Note to leaders: You may not be able to cover all the material in the time you have but be sure to cover all the study lesson questions. Also, some of the Study Lesson questions contain comments to help you lead your group. They are not meant to be the only "answers" by any means.)

### **Opening Comments**

- Let's begin with identifying who this John is:
- He was called "son of thunder," "the disciple whom Jesus loved."<sup>1</sup>
- His father was Zebedee, a simple fisherman in rather good circumstances.
- His mother was Salome, a devout follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- She may have been a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (**Mk. 15:40; John 19:25**).
- His brother was James.
- It is suspected that his position was probably somewhat better than that of the ordinary fisherman.
- Scholars believe John may have been about 25 years of age when Jesus called him.
- He had been a follower of John the Baptist.
- In the reign of Domitian, John the Disciple was banished to Patmos, but afterward he returned to Ephesus and lived to be an elderly man.
- He was the last of the twelve apostles.
- During this time in Ephesus, he wrote the Gospel concerning the deity of Christ, co-eternal with the Father.
- What makes John's Gospel different from the other three?
- Because of their similarities, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels; the three look at the life of Christ from similar viewpoints and employ similar and, at times, identical language.

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- John differs from these three Gospels in the following way:
- There is no genealogy recorded; no account of Christ's birth; nothing about His boyhood, nothing about His temptation, no transfiguration, no appointing of His disciples, no parables, no account of Christ's ascension, and no Great Commission.
- At the same time, John details things which the other Gospels omit.
- For instance, John reports on an early ministry of Jesus in Judea.
- He indicates that the duration of Christ's ministry was close to three years, not one year, which is the impression one gets from reading the synoptic Gospels.
- Only John speaks of the changing of water into wine at Cana.
- Only John tells of Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the raising of Lazarus.
- Only in John do we find the great discourses spoken by Jesus to His own disciples during the final week in Jerusalem.
- All these things point to this Gospel as being unique.
- John reveals Jesus' deity in every chapter – something to watch for as you go through this study.
- Dr. S. D. Gordon suggested: "There are three keys that unlock John's Gospel."
- **Front door key:** This key hangs right at the very front, outside, low down, within every child's reach.
- **John 1:12** - *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God--"*
- **Side door key:** At the side, a bit toward the back we find a second key.
- At the last supper with His disciples, Jesus reveals this truth to them: **John 16:28**, *"I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father"*
- His constant thought was that He used to be with the Father.
- He came down to earth on an errand and stayed for 33 years.
- He would go back again to His Father.
- **Back door key:** This key unlocks the whole book.
- It states the purpose of the Gospel.
- **John 20:31**, *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."*
- This Gospel is magnificent and as we go through it, we are sure you will be blessed many times over.
- You will grow spiritually even if you have studied this Gospel numerous times.
- The Holy Spirit never ceases to teach us from the Scriptures no matter how many times we read it!
- Let's keep some of these thoughts as we go over the study lesson for this week.

(+12 min)

## Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~30 min) – **Week's title:**

- **This week's title:** The Word Made Flesh - **John 1:1-18**
- **Highlighted verse:** *"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* – **John 1:14**

## Day 1: Read John 1:1-18

1. Read John 1:1-18 at least once, jotting down initial observations.

- Have people share some of the things they observed from this first reading.

(+7 min)

## Day 2: Read John 1:1-5 along with Genesis 1:1-5 and Psalm 33:6

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1. What do you learn about this Word from John 1:1-5? Who is the Word?

- **John 1:1-5** – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”*
- John begins his Gospel with an amazing statement - that the Word (Christ) is God!
- We use the word "Christ" instead of Jesus here because the Word is not yet incarnate.
- This statement should set the tone for the remainder of the Gospel.
- One of the reasons for this question is to help people see the major thought John is revealing - that Jesus is God.

(+2 min)

2. What connections do you see between John 1:1-5, Genesis 1:1-5, 26 and Psalm 33:6?

- **John 1:1-5** – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”*
- **Genesis 1:1-5** – *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day ---“*
- **Genesis 1:26** – *“Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”* “
- **Psalm 33:6** – *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth “*
- Notice some key phrases such as: “In the beginning,” “the Word,” “God created,” “Light/darkness,” “Let us make man in our image” “By the word of the Lord,”

(+2 min)

## Day 3: Read John 1:6-18

1. What does Jesus give to those who believe (vs 12)? Based on this passage, is everyone a child of God?

- Part 1: **John 1:12** – *“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God-- “*
- Part 2: No, the right to become children of God is given only to those who receive Him and believe.
- This verse relates to God adopting all believers in Christ as their Lord and Savior to be His children.
- This theme is something very special in New Testament (see Romans 8:16-17; Gal. 3:26-47)

(+3 min)

2. What does John the Baptist testify concerning Jesus? (1:15-18)

- **John 1:15-18** – *“John testifies concerning Him. He cries out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.' "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth*

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*came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known “*

- John the Baptists is one of the most important persons in the New Testament.
- He is mentioned 89 times.
- John had the special privilege of introducing Jesus to the nation of Israel.
- Notice what John the Baptist says about Christ in these verses:
- Jesus is eternal (v 15), Jesus Christ has the *fullness of grace and truth* (16-17), finally, Jesus Christ reveals God to us (v 18).

(+1 min)

## Day 4: Read John 20:31

1. Consider how John 1:1-18 relates to John's purpose in writing this Gospel. “...that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31)

How does John's purpose emerge right from the start?

- John had a proper understanding of who Jesus truly was, the Son of God.
- Verse 12, John knew the importance of *believing!*
- *Believe* is the keyword for the Gospel of John!
- It is found 98 times in this Gospel.

(+5 min)

2. How does John 1:1-18 lay the foundation for believing in the true Jesus?

- John goes to great lengths to provide an understanding of who Jesus truly is, that He is God and man!

(+2 min)

## Day 5: Read John 1:1-18

1. How does what you learned about Jesus from this passage enrich your worship?

- This should be an interesting question to hear responses from several people.

(+2 min)

2. Why did Jesus need to be God to accomplish our salvation? Why did Jesus need to be human to accomplish our salvation?

- By God's law in the Old Testament, a *perfect* sacrifice was required to atone for our sins. (Lev. 22:21)
- Jesus was the *perfect* sacrifice because He was sinless which means He was holy.
- The sacrifice needed to be a person (human).
- Only the God/man, Jesus Christ could accomplish our salvation.
- Our savior needed to be fully God and fully human.

(+6 min)

## Closing Comments

- In closing, Jesus became what He was not previously – a man.
- However, Christ did not cease being God.
- He was God-Man.
- Why did He come to live with us?

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- Man had sinned in the Garden of Eden and because of that sin, Christ *the image of the invisible God* (Col. 1:15) came to save all who would believe in Him.
- Henrietta C. Mears explains it this way, “So the question may be, what must we do for salvation?”
- Based on **John 1:12** – “*Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God*”
- We must receive Him and believe in His name
- The result of receiving and believing is that a person becomes *a child of God!*
- It only seems appropriate to identify things people should **not count on** for salvation.
- **John 1:13** – “*children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God*”
- Here are some things people count on today for salvation which will not accomplish salvation:
- *Not of natural descent* – heredity – how much people count on their heredity which may include having been a church member for many years but without ever “receiving and believing” in Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- *Nor of human decision* – culture and education. It is not what we know but *Whom* we know that counts.
- *Nor of a husband's will* – prestige or influence.
- *But born of God* – by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. God comes down and redeems us, if we will only receive and believe Him as our Savior and Lord.”<sup>2</sup>
- So what is your reaction to these verses?
- Do you know the truth of them personally?
- Has Christ become the answer to the problems in your life?
- He is the only One who will ever answer them completely.

(+4 min)

### Closing Prayer

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(+2 min)

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<sup>1</sup> “What the Bible Is All About,” by Henrietta C. Mears, Gospel Light Publications 1966, pgs. 405-410

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.