



The Incarnation

The Word Became Flesh - John 1:1-12

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*(Leaders, please use these questions **as a guide for discussion**. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)*

(v1-2) The pre-existence of the Word (Logos):

How do we know John is referring to Jesus as the Word?

Was there ever a time before Jesus?

(v3-5) The work and nature of the Word

Genesis 1:1 tells us God created all things. Colossians says Christ created all things – how does that work?

What sort of life is John talking about?

What kind of light is John talking about?

(v6-8) The forerunning of the Word

Is this John the Baptist?

(v9-11) The rejection of the Word

Who were his own?

(v12-13) The receiving of the Word

How do we receive Jesus?

What does 'believe in his name' mean?

(v.14) The Word became flesh

What is our Lord like?

Apply: What does it mean to you to have Jesus in your life? Give examples.

PRAY: *Father, thank you for sending Jesus - the eternal word made flesh - to live among us full of grace and truth. Thank you for his life giving death and resurrection for us. As we head towards Christmas, help us to have an ever expanding view of the greatness of the Incarnation. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



John 1.1-14

...JOHN 1:1 – 14 pray –

St John's 30.11.2025

...The Word Became Flesh

A. (1-2) The pre-existence of the Word (*Logos*).

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

How do we know John is referring to Jesus as the word?

Not until verse 17 is Jesus actually named!

John deliberately starts his gospel in the same way the first book of the Bible starts "In the beginning God....created etc."

But he uses a Greek word (*Logos*) representing not only the *spoken* word but also the *unspoken* word still in the mind – The Reason. From a Greek understanding of the universe, this meant the rational principal that governs all things.

However, the Jews used the word as a way of referring to God. So, John uses a term that was meaningful to both Jews and Gentiles.

Jewish rabbis often referred to God (especially in His more personal aspects) in terms of His word. They spoke of God Himself as "the word of God."

For example, ancient Hebrew editions of the Old Testament change Exodus 19:17 (*Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God*) to "Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet the word of God."

...In the mind of the ancient Jews, the phrase "the word of God" could be used to refer to God Himself.

The Greek philosophers saw the *logos* as the power that puts sense into the world, making the world orderly instead of chaotic.

The *logos* was the power that set the world in perfect order and kept it going in perfect order.

and the Word was with God The Word was distinct from the Father and **was God** Jesus was God in the fullest sense – Paul identifies him in his

Roman letter as “Christ, who is God over all...”
(Ro. 5:9)

There was never a time before Jesus.
Beyond even the creation of the world - **He was with God in the beginning** In other words there has never been a time when Jesus was not there.

...B (3-5) The work and nature of the Word.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Word created *all* things that were created. Therefore He Himself is an uncreated Being, as the Apostle Paul wrote in **...Colossians 1:16.**

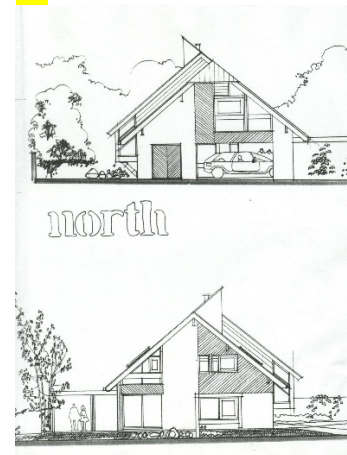
The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Genesis 1:1 tells us God created all things.
Colossians 1 says Christ created all things – how does that work?

The simple answer – and one John is pointing towards – is that Christ and God are ONE>

When I was an architect – we received a brief for a building – sometimes for a house. We would try and extract as much of the life-style of the client as would benefit from the design, the layout, the structure, materials and so on.

...



From that a set of working drawings & specification communicating all the design process would be prepared ready for tender inviting contractors to quote and then build.

But frequently if you watch Grand Designs – the architect, builder and client are one in the same person!

This is a tiny bit of the sense John is telling us -

...For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

⁴ In him was life,

One of the great themes of John's Gospel is LIFE. The term is found 36 times in John while no other NT book uses it more than 17 times.

What sort of life is John talking about?

Life is Christ's gift (10:28) and more – Jesus Himself is THE life (14:6). John uses "life" in the sense of eternal life – the Greek word is Aionios. A word latched onto by the early Christians: -

The meaning of the Word stretches from a very long time reaching to heaven and the soul. But it came to be only applicable to what belongs and befits God.

Eternal life is used of the great blessings of Christian life brought by Jesus Christ.

...and that life was the light of all mankind. And now another big John's gospel word – LIGHT! What kind of light is John talking about?

From Jesus comes all spiritual enlightenment John records in 8:12: **Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

This is one of 7 self-descriptions given by Jesus prefaced by the words "I am..." (6:35 - 8:12 – 9:5 – 10:7 – 10:11 – 14: 6 & 15:1) Jesus is taking on the name God disclosed as His name to Moses – (Exodus 3:14)

"In the first creation, 'darkness was upon the face of the deep' (Genesis 1:2) until God called light into being, so the new creation involves the banishing of spiritual darkness by the light which shines in the Word." (Bruce)

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ...



The light cannot lose against the darkness; the darkness will never overcome it.

...C (6-8) The forerunner of the Word.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Is this hairy John the Baptist?

Yes – but he only wore camel hair *garments*!

...



John the Baptist bore witness to the light, that all through him might believe. The work of John the

Baptist was deliberately focused on bringing people to faith in Jesus the Messiah

. He Himself was not that Light, he came only as a witness of that Light: John the Baptist's work was remarkably well received and widely known.

It was important for John the Gospel-writer to make it clear that John the Baptist was not that Light, but that he pointed towards and bore witness to that Light.

The matter of witness is a serious business, establishing truth and giving ground for faith. Yet, witness “does more. It commits a person.

If I take my stand in the witness box and testify that such-and-such is the truth of the matter I am no longer neutral.

I have committed myself. John lets us know that there are those like John the Baptist who have committed themselves by their witness to Christ.

... D (9-11) The rejection of the Word.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world,

and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

What clearer way could God communicate with us humans than that he took on flesh and blood and from Jesus switch the light on in our understanding!

Does a person want to know what God is like – or even better wants to know God – point them to Jesus.

But even from such amazing love Jesus was not recognised and was not received.

He came to that which was His own:

In other words ‘he came home’.

When the Word came to this world He did not come as an alien. He came home.
How little has changed in his reception!

...E (12-13) The receiving of the Word.

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not

of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

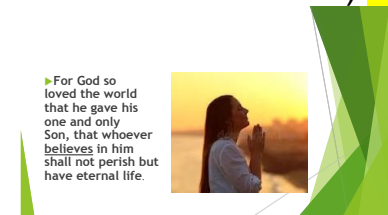
The Son of God became the Son of Man that the sons of man might become the sons of God – children of God.

he gave the right to become children of God

Membership of God’s family is by grace alone – the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8 – 9). It is never a human achievement as verse 13 emphasises -

But note Jesus has to be received
How do we receive Jesus?

We simply invite Him into our lives. He does not force Himself on to us. In John’s gospel believing in Jesus is another big subject – it crops up in the best known verse of the Bible – John 3:16: (along with 98 other times!) ...



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

What does believe in his name mean?

Remember what the name Jesus means? God our Saviour. Believing in /trusting in Him for salvation.

(Spurgeon) "Faith is described as 'receiving' Jesus. It is the empty cup placed under the flowing stream; the penniless hand held out for heavenly alms."

born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John reminds us of the nature of the birth. Those who received Him are born of God, but not of human effort or achievement.

This new birth is something that brings change to the life of a person (Spurgeon)..." **like a watch which has a new mainspring, not a mere face and hands repaired, but new inward machinery, with freshly adjusted works, which act to a different time and tune; and whereas he went wrong before, now he goes right, because he is right within.**"

...F (14) The Word became flesh.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is John's most startling statement yet. It would have amazed thinkers in both the Jewish and the Greek world to hear that the Word became flesh.

The Greeks generally thought of God *too low*. To them John wrote: **the Word became flesh**. To ancient people, gods such as Zeus and Hermes were simply super-men; they were not equal to the order and reason of the Logos.

John told the Greek thinkers, "The Logos you know who made and ordered the universe actually became flesh."

The Jews generally thought of God *too high*. To them John wrote: the **Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us**.

Ancient Jews had a hard time accepting that the great God revealed in the Old Testament could take on human form. John told the Jewish thinkers, "The Word of God became flesh."

God has come close to you in Jesus Christ. You don't have to struggle to find Him

And made his dwelling among us: The idea behind this phrase is more literally, dwelt as in a tent among us.

...**We have seen His glory:**

John testified to this as an eyewitness, even as John the Baptist testified.

John could say, "I saw His glory, the glory belonging to the **one and only Son of the Father.**" **who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

What is our Lord like?

He holds both the hard truth of the sinless Jesus together with the comfort of grace and mercy. The truth is that we are all sinners and need saving.

The truth is also the love of God who holds out forgiveness and mercy to us in our desperate need. Jesus is full of loving grace that drove him to the cross for our propitiation AND...

Jesus is full of truth – he is in fact THE truth as in his way, truth and life. (14:6).

PRAY

As we reflect on the glorious depths of Jesus' being – always there – always has been – One with God the Father in perfect harmony creating all that we see and understand...

...He invites you this morning to receive Him into your life as your Saviour – your cleanser of your sins and as your Lord and so become children born of God.

Hear His promise: -

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

Come Lord into our hearts and lives as Saviour and Lord. **Amen**