

Chapter 1 - Study Questions

John is about to take us on an incredible journey through his gospel. He will write about the astonishing works and the profound words of Jesus. But before John embarks upon this great journey, he sets the trajectory of his gospel in his introduction. Much like a master guide would review his route before he embarked upon his great trek, John delivers to us, in a compact form, the major themes that will be expanded upon in the twenty chapters that follow. So let us begin this journey by allowing John to introduce us to his primary subject, Jesus.

Most biographies begin by exploring the origins of their subject. John does the same thing, but because of the unique person of Jesus, John must go beyond the normal method of introduction. With the opening words of his gospel John takes us way back to what he calls, “the beginning.” In reading this gospel we should ask, “What does John mean by beginning?” The concept of “beginning” is derived from the Old Testament, especially the first verse of the Hebrew Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). John is taking the reader to a “time” before anything was created. Then he states that “the Word” was there, “in the beginning,” and was “with God” and “was fully God.” So to properly introduce us to his subject, John had to take us to a time before creation, when only the Word and God existed.

1. *Do you think* John intends for his readers to place the Word and God in the same category? (1:1-2)
2. *Do you think* John places humans in the same category as the Word? (1:1)
3. What is it about the Word that is so important to humanity? (1:4)

John goes to great lengths to tell us, the readers, that Jesus is unlike any human, and that he is like God. Jesus is separate and different from humanity, but this is just the beginning of John’s story. The one who was totally unique, the Word, became flesh, and lived as a human, “Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us” (1:14).

4. What reasons does John give us concerning the importance of the creator becoming human? (1:12, 18, 29)
5. What significant role did John the Baptist play in the coming of Jesus into the world? (1:7)
6. Why did many people follow Jesus? (1:36-37, 41-42, 48-49)