

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of April 12

Introduction

The Gospel of John is the Life-Giving Gospel and opens with this declaration: “In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave *life* to everything that was created, and his *life* brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:1-5). By connecting the coming of Christ into the world with the beginning of all creation, John is making a startling statement, the *logos* of creation *is* a Person.

Hearing the echo of Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created ...” John shows us that the fiery creative force fueling the entirety of existence is embodied in a Person. This embodied *Logos*, speaking and actively creating from the beginning, is both ever creating and ever-sustaining *life* throughout the universe ... still. Utilizing a concept with which both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures would have been familiar, John’s prologue (vv1-14) immediately segues into how *God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light* ... to say how the true light, the One who gives light to everyone, is coming into the world. He is the Word of God made flesh.

Read John 1:1-14

John the Baptist reminds us of closing words in the Old Testament: “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6). John steps onto the scene as a voice shouting in the wilderness: “Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming!” Some 400 years of ‘famine’ of hearing the words of the LORD, foretold through the prophet Amos, is over. God had said: “The time is surely coming ... When I will send a famine on the land—not

a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11). Now Heaven speaks again, as John the Baptizer preaches: “... Clear the way for the LORD’S coming” (John 1:23).

Read John 1:15-18, 19-28

Discussion:

- Who are you? – An important question, one that was asked of John the Baptizer in John 1:19. Notice John answers by saying who he is not (vv20-22). Sometimes this is helpful, to come to a fuller understanding of who we are. According to v23, how does John eventually respond to the leaders’ demand: “Then *Who Are You?* We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?” Who does John quote?
- What do you make of John’s preaching and baptizing in the wilderness? In what ways is John upsetting the ‘order’ of the Jewish leaders?
- Whose are you? – Perhaps a deeper question, as it reveals the religious leaders’ deeper issue. As they demand: “If you aren’t the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, *what right do you have to baptize?*” it is obvious they have little intent of humbly submitting to John’s baptism. In their estimation, John isn’t authorized to baptize the many people coming to hear him, let alone shout with a voice of authority. Yet, John knows *whose* he is. According to his response in v26-27, how do we know John is, in fact, authorized to baptize in order to prepare the way for Messiah?

Read John 1:29-34

- What stands out to you in these verses (vv29-34)?
- What is particularly compelling regarding John’s personal testimony (vv32-34)?

Read John 1:35-51

- John the Baptizer had disciples. Now some of them are transitioning to Jesus' ministry. Notice the first 'red' letters in John's Gospel. What does Jesus ask them in John 1:38?
- How would you respond to this question, if Jesus were to ask you this today? In other words, what are your top two needs in your life right now? How could the life group pray for you?
- *Come and See!* ... and *Come, follow Me* seem to be themes in the Gospel of John (e.g. will also be the invitation shared by a woman whose life Jesus transforms, in John 4:29). What disciples are called in this remaining section of John, chapter one?
- What does this tell us about the power of an invitation? **Who should you invite?**

In Closing

Philip inviting Nathanael is an interesting exchange in vv45-46. Something must have happened to Nathanael 'under the fig tree' that only God would know. Because, whatever it was, that encounter as Jesus says, *I could see you under the fig tree*, caused Nathanael to go from "Can anything good come out of Nazareth" (v46) to "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!" (v49). Do you ever wonder if the Lord hears you? Sees you? Though there may be times when it seems Heaven is silent, there will be a time when the Lord will speak to you. And he knows all about you. So there is no reason to hide. This is wonderful because we never have to bring the Lord up to speed about anything, for he already knows everything. Jesus' words in v51 refer to Genesis 28:10-15, Jacob dreaming of a stairway connecting heaven and earth. Close in prayer by naming one or two of your needs right now and praying for each other in your life group.

One Year Bible Reading

Apr. 12: Joshua 5:1-7:15, Luke 15:1-32, Psalm 81:1-16, Proverbs 13:1
 Apr. 13: Joshua 7:16-9:2, Luke 16:1-18, Psalm 82:1-8, Proverbs 13:2-3
 Apr. 14: Joshua 9:3-10:43, Luke 16:19-17:10, Psalm 83:1-18, Proverbs 13:4
 Apr. 15: Joshua 11:1-12:24, Luke 17:11-37, Psalm 84:1-12, Proverbs 13:5-6
 Apr. 16: Joshua 13:1-14:15, Luke 18:1-17, Psalm 85:1-13, Proverbs 13:7-8
 Apr. 17: Joshua 15:1-63, Luke 18:18-43, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 13:9-10
 Apr. 18: Joshua 16:1-18:28, Luke 19:1-27, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 13:11

JOHN

The Life-Giving Gospel

Text: John 1:1-14, 35-50

PLAIN TRUTH:

Jesus is _____ and you can have _____ if you _____ in Jesus by the power of his name.