

LEARNER GUIDE

Introduction

The Book of John was written approximately _____ years after Jesus' earthly ministry and more than four decades after the other 3 Gospel books.

____% of the content in the Book of John is not recorded in the three synoptic Gospels.

John concentrates on Jesus' _____. And he doesn't record Jesus' ministry chronologically, but by common _____.

The purpose of John is to answer the question: _____?

John 1:1-5

John had two audiences: _____ and _____.

To the *Greco-Romans*, John 1:1 brought to mind the search for "_____,", which to the Greeks meant ultimate truth and the meaning of life.

John tells the Greeks *logos* (ultimate truth/meaning of life) is not a WHAT; it's a _____!

To the *Jews*, John 1:1 brought to mind _____.

In Jewish culture, older meant _____; first meant _____.

Ultimate truth and the presence of God were signified by _____.

John tell Jews *light* (ultimate truth/presence of God) is not a WHAT; it's a _____!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 1:15, 19-23. Based on John the Baptist's words and what you learned about Jewish culture, what heresies do you think had developed in the early church that John, the Gospel writer, is trying to dispel?

2. A heresy is a belief or practice that explicitly undermines the gospel. The Greek word for *heresy* literally means "self-chosen opinion." What self-chosen opinions or doctrines that do not originate from God permeate our culture today?

3. Read John 1:6-9. In your own words, explain how the text describes John the Baptist's role.

4. Use a concordance to look up the Greek word for *witness* in John 1:7 (G3141). What English word does that transliteration bring to mind? How does this effect your thoughts about John's commitment to his role?

5. Read John 1:14 below and circle the last three words:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (ESV)

How can we bear witness to the light in our culture in a way that reflects both God's grace and truth? How does that require courage of us?

PERSONAL STUDY

Part One

Read John 1:1-18

Unlike the Books of Matthew, Mark & Luke, the Gospel of John doesn't begin with any details about the birth of Jesus. Why do you think John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, left out this event?

Write John 1:1 below.

Write Genesis 1:1 below.

John intentionally structured the first line of the Book of John to bring our minds to the first line of Genesis. Jesus did not come into being when He was born in Bethlehem. Jesus has always existed, long before His earthly ministry. He was present at creation. He was present on every page of the Old Testament. And He is present now.

Look at John 1:12. To whom did God give the right to become children of God?

While every person is *God's creation*, made in His image and loved so much that He sent His Son to die for them, God's children are those who have received redemption from sin by confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Close in prayer, asking God to help you see His Word, not as a collection of stories, but as one story. Thank Him that as His children, His story is also your story of redemption through Jesus.

Part Two

Read John 1:19-34

John the Baptist is clear that he is not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet. Who do you think *the Prophet* is in verse 21?

Check your answer. John 1:21 is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15. Read that verse in Deuteronomy. Now turn to Acts 3:19-26 and read that. Who do these verses confirm is *the Prophet*?

John the Baptist tells us who he is NOT (not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet who is Jesus), but he also tells us who he IS. Record the answer he gives about himself from John 1:23 below.

How would you describe what it means to *make straight the way of the Lord*?

According to *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, the phrase *make straight the way* is the same phrase used in other Greek writings of the time to describe the steersman or helmsman of a ship. John the Baptist lived in such a way as to steer people toward Jesus. Can you think of someone you know who lives in a way that points others to Jesus? What characteristics does that person demonstrate?

John the Baptist knew who he wasn't, and he knew who he was, all because he knew who Jesus was.
(Matt Chandler, *John 1-3: The Word Became Flesh*, p.51)

Close in prayer, asking God for opportunities this week to point others toward Jesus.

Part Three

Read John 1:35-51.

This passage of Scripture is rich with testimonies that help answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” Complete the chart below to discover those powerful testimonies.

Scripture Reference	Description of Jesus	Person who testified
John 1:35-36		
John 1:40-41		
John 1:45		
John 1:49		

Andrew heard John the Baptist testify about Jesus then shared the news with his brother, Simon Peter. The next day, Philip met Jesus and testified about his encounter to Nathaniel. Each of the men’s testimonies was both accurate and personal. What is your testimony about who Jesus is? Use the space below to write a name or description of Jesus that is especially meaningful to you. Is there someone with whom God might be calling you to share that testimony?

In John 1:51, Jesus describes Himself as *the Son of Man*. Read Daniel 7:13-14, where He was given this Messianic title. The term, unlike *King* or *Christ*, didn’t carry a political sentiment in Bible times. Jesus often used it because He doesn’t want to be thought of as a political savior. His plan is bigger - to save believers from sin and its consequences, renew them to holy life, and restore them to a right relationship with God for all of eternity.

Close in prayer, thanking God for salvation from sin and spiritual death through Jesus.

Heart-to-Heart

Spend some time with Jesus using one of the suggestions below. Remember to reference the RESOURCES pages to help you.

- Revisit a verse or passage that stuck out to you this week. Compare the text in a few different Bible translations or do a word study on a few key words.
- Read a commentary on John 1.
- Journal about what you learned through His Word this week.
- Spend time in prayer, focusing on what the Holy Spirit revealed to you through your study of John 1.
- Record any questions you still have about the text.

Looking Ahead

Read John 2.

Use the space below to record anything that jumps out to you or any questions that come to mind about the text.
