



The Dynamic Gospel Study Guide – Book of John

Chapter 1:

1 Before there was anything else, there was God's creative imagination. What He spoke was written in the creation. This creative Word was right there with God when it all started. This Word was the living, breathing expression of God Himself.

2 As the creative Word existed with God in the beginning,

3 so through Him and by Him everything came into being. If it exists, it's because of Him.

4 And not only things: Since He was so full of life, it makes perfect sense that life would naturally come from Him. This real, living and eternal Life then lit up the world so that every man could see what real life is.

5 The world is a dark place, but that darkness is no match for the Light that has been let loose. The world's darkness will never drive it away or snuff it out.

6 Now, before this was revealed to us, there was a man sent from God to get our hearts ready. His name was John.

7 He knew what to look for and knew before the rest of us that the Light was coming. He did not hold back his witness and told us all about it, so that when He was revealed, we would be ready to accept Him as the Light of the world.

8 John was not the Light himself but was commissioned to announce the revealing of God's awesome message. And he pointed to exactly where we should look.

9 The Light was coming into the world to make sense of things. We wouldn't be able to escape its brilliance.

10 Though the true Word was now in the world, walking among us, we didn't recognize it yet, even though the very universe hadn't existed until He called it forth.

11 He came to the people that should have recognized Him, but the nation built on His own book turned its back instead.

12 Yet there were still individuals who heard the message and accepted it without reservation, putting their complete faith in Him. Because He was God wearing flesh, He had the right to adopt them into God's eternal family.

13 These faithful followers did not become God's children by some special circumstance of birth or superior moral character. They were adopted by God unconditionally. And in this way, they were 'born' into a new life.

14 So, we can say with confidence: God the Word dressed Himself in a body just like ours and lived with us, walking our streets and eating our food. And even clothed in flesh there was no mistaking His powerful authority. It was just as the written Word told us it would be - the

magnificent Son of our Heavenly Father right here among us, full of the Truth that transforms and the powerful riches of God which He gladly bestowed on anyone who asked.

15 When the Light began to shine, John pointed Him out, calling loudly “He's the One! I may have preceded Him here, but He was always ahead of me. Anything He says trumps me.”

16 When we're near the Son, one good thing follows after another. It couldn't be otherwise - it's His nature to be a true gift-giver.

17 God laid down the Law through Moses, but the power to understand and live it came through this Son of God. His name? Jesus.

18 One might say “There's no way to see God.” Up till now that's been the case. But now God chose to reveal Himself in His Son. He is in very nature and power the same as His Father. They are One.

19 What did the religious authorities think of all this talk of a coming Savior? Well, they sent their sharpest theologians to John to get a straight answer. “Who are you, really?” they asked.

20 John didn't ignore the trick question, though he smelled a trap. He told the truth. “I am not the Messiah.”

21 “OK, then who are you?” they continued. “Do you claim to be the returned Elijah?” “No, not him either,” John replied. “The prophet mentioned by Moses, then?” John said, emphatically, “No!”

22 Exasperated, they pressed one more time. “Well, then who are you? We must give a report to our bosses. Just spit it out!”

23 John answered in the words of Isaiah, the great prophet. “I am just someone on the fringes shouting to those who bother to listen, “Get the debris out of the street. The Lord Himself is about to pass this way!” I'm doing what the prophet talked about.”

24 These inquisitors were Fundamentalists, and the answer didn't satisfy them. They were hung up on the significance of all kinds of rituals,

25 so they asked him about his practices. “If you're not the promised Liberator, or Elijah, or the Prophet then why do you bother baptizing anyone?”

26 John's answer was simple enough, but it mystified the Fundamentalists. “I simply baptize with water but walking among you even now is Someone you say you know but do not.

27 “You will see Him soon enough, and when you do it will be obvious that I'm not worthy to even clean his feet.”

28 This scene took place at Bethany, the one across the Jordan River, at the place where John had become famous for his baptizing.

29 The very next day, Jesus showed up. As He approached, John was overwhelmed, shouting “Behold, the Lamb of God! He will lift the burden of sin and take it right out of this world!

30 “I told you He was coming! He's the One! Just like I've been telling you all along: “After me will come the man who has always been far greater than I, for He has always been.”

31 “Until now I didn't know His identity, just that He couldn't be revealed until my message was preached. Once the baptisms began, I knew He would appear to all the people for who He really is.”

32 At this point John was in rapture, attuned more to the heavens than to men. What he saw he never stopped telling others about. “I saw the Spirit of God Himself descend from Heaven with the gentleness of a dove and hovering down to the shoulders of Jesus.

33 “Let me make this very clear: I didn't know till that moment that the One I was preaching about was Jesus. But that morning, the One who had commissioned me to preach and baptize

with water said in a perfectly clear voice “The One on whom you see My Spirit descend and rest, He is the One who will baptize the faithful with the Spirit Himself.”

34 “And that's exactly what happened that day. There was no question in my mind. This Jesus was and is the Son of God.”

35 John's ministry didn't skip a beat. He was back at work the very next day with two of his students baptizing all who wanted freedom from the guilt of their sinful lives. They kept an eye out for Jesus.

36 John looked up from his work and saw Jesus walking in the crowd. John called out again in loud voice to all those around him “Look! There He is again! It's God's perfect Lamb!”

37 John's students had been waiting for this and chased after Him immediately.

38 Jesus turned to them as they drew close. “What are you in such a hurry to find?” Jesus asked them. They addressed Him with respect. “Rabbi,” (the Jewish word for wise teacher) “where are You staying?”

39 Jesus set out, saying “Walk with me and you'll see.” John's students did just that, deciding to stay with Him for the rest of the day, since it was already late afternoon.

40 Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of those two men. He trusted what John had said about the coming Liberator and followed Jesus from that point forward.

41 Once he knew where Jesus was staying, he went looking for his brother right away. Without beating around the bush he told Simon “We've found the Liberator - the Messiah; He's finally here!” (Messiah means “Christ” or “Deliverer” in Aramaic.)

42 Without waiting to discuss it, Andrew practically dragged his brother to Jesus. Upon meeting Simon and sizing him up, Jesus immediately gave him a nickname. “You're John's son, aren't you? Well from now on, I'm calling you Cephas!” (or in Greek, 'Peter,' which means 'Rock.')

43 The next morning Jesus headed out to Galilee, a good walk away. When He arrived in the town He met a man named Philip. He said two words: “Follow Me!” And he did. Immediately.

44 Philip lived in Bethsaida, the same hometown as Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip, in turn, wasted no time bringing the news to Nathanael. With the same urgency as Andrew he said “We've found the Liberator the scriptures talk about, from Moses on. It's Jesus, the Nazarene. His father is Joseph.”

46 Nathanael laughed it off at first saying “Can anything good come out of that town?” Philip leveled him with his eyes and said “Come and see for yourself.” And so they went.

47 When Jesus saw him coming He observed “Well, here we have a true believer! He's not playing games.”

48 Nathanael wasn't sure how to respond. “I'm sorry. Do we know each other? How do You know what I'm like?” he asked. Jesus answered, “Before Philip even reached you with the news, when you were shading yourself under that fig tree, I saw you clearly for who you are.”

49 Nathanael swallowed hard. “Rabbi! You truly are the Son of God! Israel's King!”

50 Now even Jesus was surprised. “You've bought in just because I say I saw you sitting under a fig tree? Well, it's just getting started. Brace yourself. It's going to get a lot more interesting.

51 “Count on it - before we're finished, you'll see Heaven itself open up with the very angels descending to meet with Me. Then I'll send them back up to do their work.”

Explain the Context:

From your reading provide a short answer to the following:

What is the theme of this chapter?	What is the BIG Idea?
What is something that surprised you?	What is this chapter <i>not</i> saying?

Take a moment to consider these questions:

- 1) John begins with one of the most unique introductions in the Bible. Why do you think he began his Gospel this way?
- 2) To whom, do you believe, is this account written?
- 3) From your reading of Scripture, what makes John's Gospel unique?
- 4) Who are the actors introduced in this chapter?
- 5) Why does John the Baptist get such prominence?
- 6) In this context, the Greek is clear that 'Messiah' means 'Liberator'. From what did the people seek liberation? From what did Jesus offer liberation?

Apply the Scripture

Write the verse that stood out to you while reading [in this translation or your favorite].

How does this verse challenge you? Does it reveal an attribute of God's character?

For further study:

- Revelation 19:11-13
- Malachi 3:1 (prophecy of John the Baptist)
- Isaiah 40:3
- Isaiah 53: 1-9