

A Different Kind of *Christmas*

Group Discussion Guide

Thinking about what John tells us

Matthew and Luke begin the “Christmas story” with the events in and around the birth of Jesus. But John has another part of the story to tell; for John, the beginnings of the Christmas story are in eternity past. With that in mind, Read John 1:1-34.

There are two “Johns” in view in this opening section; one is the author of the Gospel, the other is John the Baptist who we meet in this section. When we ask about “John,” keep in mind which one is in view.

What does John tell us about *who it is* that is coming into the world in verses 1:1-13?

What does John tells us about *what this coming one will do* in verses 1:1-13?

What does John (the Baptist) say about *who it is* that is coming into the world in verses 1:15, 19-28?

What does John (the Baptist) tell us about *what this coming one will do* in verses 1:15, 19-34?

Drawing on what these two Johns have communicated, what would you say Christmas—the coming of Jesus into the world—is really about?

Thinking about what this means for Christmas

It is easy to think of Christmas as if it is merely about “that moment in time” when Jesus came into the world. Although it *is* about that, the entrance of Jesus into our world is tied to who God, Himself, is and what He has been doing for all eternity. How could an awareness of that bigger picture deepen and broaden your sense of celebration at Christmas?

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Leader's Guide for Discussion

Thinking about what John tells us

Perhaps you've seen the moment or been part of the giving when some small gift is given that really is, in some sense, "connected" to something huge. (Think, for example of a key to a car or a ticket for a flight or . . .) When we think of Christmas, our attention rightly goes to the birth of a child; but that newborn is "connected" to something huge. And the Gospel of John helps us see that.

As you walk through the opening verses of this Gospel, it might be easy to be overwhelmed by the grandeur of what John tells us. We can end up feeling that John's truth is beyond our grasp. But to do that is to miss out on what he wants us to see. Although we might not squeeze out every drop of truth from his words, we can find something refreshing here.

John (the Gospel writer) uses a variety of images and metaphors to convey to us amazing truth. Jesus, who enters our world at Christmas, is so much more than "a baby born in a manger." He is . . .

Divine (1:1)

Eternal (1:2)

The Creator (1:3)

The Source and Foundation for all Life (1:4)

The Source of all grace (1:16)

The Revealer of God to man (1:17)

John (the Baptist) bore witness to this Jesus and the Gospel writer tells us some of what this John said. Jesus, who enters our world at Christmas, is so much more than "a baby born in a manger." He is . . .

Superior to John (1:15)

The Lord (1:23)

The Lamb of God who removes sin (1:29)

The One who pours out the Spirit (1:33)

The Son of God (1:34)

Thinking about what this means for Christmas

Clearly, the magnitude of these insights can easily overwhelm us—making us feel that such thoughts are beyond our grasp. But for the wonder and glory and power and joy of Christmas to truly become ours (not only at this season but throughout the year), we must come face to face with these amazing truths. This Jesus, whose entrance into the world we celebrate, is far greater, far more glorious, truly more amazing, than we typically even imagine!

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