

Teaching Points

Verses 1-18 of John 1 can be referred to as the prologue to John's gospel. This is basically the preface to John's account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

As we begin John's gospel we want to appreciate the unique introduction. Think about the first chapter of the other three gospels:

Matthew 1 traces the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham and David and briefly describes Mary's betrothal to Joseph.

Mark 1 discusses John the Baptist's ministry, the temptation of Christ, the calling of the first disciples, as well as several miraculous healings.

Luke 1 focuses on the the announcements to Zacharias and Mary regarding the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.

But when we come to **John 1** we begin with a much broader scope. John starts off with some incredible comments about Christ that reach all the way back to eternity! John begins his account of the life of Jesus by declaring to us that Christ is God Himself.

Notice the parallels between John 1 and Genesis 1:

<u>Genesis 1</u>	<u>John 1</u>
"In the beginning God..." (v. 1)	"In the beginning was the Word..." (v. 1)
"God created the heavens and the earth." (v. 1)	"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (v. 3)
"...darkness was on the face of the deep...Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (vs. 1, 3)	"And the light shines in the darkness...That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." (vs. 5, 9)

Why is John mimicking Genesis so much? Because he wants us to know right away that Jesus is none other than God Himself! The God of Genesis 1, who commanded the light to shine, is now stepping into His own creation.

Discussion Question: How is the darkness of John 1 different than the darkness of Genesis 1?

Thoughts: *Genesis describes a physical darkness while John is talking about a spiritual darkness. Praise God that He didn't abandon His creation to ruin and destruction. He Himself came to shine the light in our dark and fallen world.*

Discussion Question: How does Jesus give light to humanity?

Thoughts: *He opens the eyes of our hearts so that we can behold the truth of God. He gives life to our spiritually dead hearts so that we can live in the love of God. He speaks the truth to us (He is literally called the Word of God here in chapter 1).*

The prologue is also important because it establishes several **key words and themes** that John will explore throughout the rest of the story. Some of these major words/themes are: **Light** (vs. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9), **Darkness** (vs. 5), **Belief** (v. 12), **Unbelief** (vs. 10-11), **Christ as the Word of God** (vs. 1, 14), **Grace** (vs. 14, 16, 17), **Children of God** (vs. 12-13), **The World** (vs. 9-10).

These themes are thoroughly developed throughout the rest of John's gospel. He follows the belief of Christ's people and contrasts it with the unbelief of His enemies. Those who trust in Him walk in the light. Those who reject Him are lost in darkness.

Lastly, the prologue also establishes two priceless benefits of having Christ.

1. He reveals the Father to us.

Verse 18, ***"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."*** Jesus came to proclaim the sovereign saving grace of God to a world of lost sinners.

Discussion Question: How necessary is it for Christ to reveal God to us? Is there another way for us to acquire the knowledge of God?

Thoughts: *Romans says that all humans have a knowledge of God written on their hearts. The sad truth is that we naturally suppress the truth and prefer to live in the darkness of sin (how awful!). Christ not only declares the truth of God to us but He also changes our hearts so that we desire, cherish, and submit to the truth about God.*

2. He enables sinners to be adopted into God's family.

Verse 12, ***"But as many received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name..."***

Without the saving work of Jesus we could never enter into a right relationship with God our Maker. Faith in Jesus results in acceptance with God and a place in His eternal kingdom and family.

Miscellaneous Discussion Questions:

What happened to the word according to verse 14? Why is this significant?

Why did Christ's own people reject Him (v. 11)? What does this say about humanity?

Prayer Focus

Spend time praising God that we've become His children by faith. Let's rejoice in our adoption.

Spend time praying that those who are in darkness will come to the light and experience the knowledge of God through Christ.

Worship the awesome Lord Jesus. Perhaps we are familiar with these verses and they seem almost ordinary to our ears. Let's pray with a sense of awe and wonder as we reflect on this spectacular presentation of Jesus.