



December Cell Talk: Week 2

Theme: Heaven's Perspective on Christmas (Rev 12)

Kit List: Bibles, candle, matches, words to "The First Nowell"

Welcome

What is your favourite word, and why? Is there one word that reminds you of Christmas? (Reminder: See if you can find a news article about your neighbourhood to bring in and discuss, as a way of "reading the world" alongside reading the Word).

Worship

Where have you seen God and community this week? Where have you seen light shining in the darkness?

Light six candles this week for our sixth week of Advent, the time we celebrate Jesus' coming. As you light the candles, have someone read *Col 1:15-23*.

Sing "The First Nowell" together (words: <http://www.hymns.me.uk/the-first-noel-christmas-hymn.htm>)

Make sure to include the verse which reads: "Then let us all in one accord / Sing praises to our heavenly Lord / Who has made heaven and earth of nought / And with his blood mankind has bought."

Add your prayers to the Scripture and carol.

Word

Read *John 1:1-18* together.

What does this passage have to do with Christmas?

What is the "Word"? What does this mean?

Who are "the people" who don't receive the Word? Why do they refuse to receive him?

Why would religious people not receive the Word of God when it came into the world?

Why is Jesus described as "light"? What does light do?

What does it mean to you that the "Word became flesh and dwelt among us"?

Read the following OT Scriptures out to see what "God making his dwelling among us" may have meant to some of the first readers: *Ex 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezekiel 11:22; Zech 2:10*

What kind of glory does Jesus display throughout the nativity stories? Is it the kind of glory the world expects? What does this tell you about God?

Witness

Go out to street corners and declare that the light of the world has come. The best way to do this at this time of year is through Christmas carols. One way to do this is by signing up for a Kettles shift as a cell group this week. For those in Vancouver, **we are now into the last weeks before Christmas, so it is vital to fill all the Kettles shifts. Please call Nicole before (or during) your cell and find out what shifts are available!**

Also, be in prayer daily for a friend who does not yet know Christ the Word of God. Now is a great time of the year to talk about the Word of God, the light of the world, with friends who don't know Jesus.

Wealth

Are you up to date on your tithing for the year? Now at the end of the year is a good time to ensure that you have been supporting your local ministry with your finances as well as your time and prayers. Also, check out www.justsalvos.com for some just Christmas gifts this year.

Action Point

Organise a Christmas party together for your cell, making sure to invite people who have been part of your cell in the past, and people you hope may want to become part of your cell in the future.

Leader's Guide

John's Gospel tells the heritage of Jesus differently than the other three gospels. Mark starts right in with John the Baptist, Matthew begins by tracing Jesus' ancestry back to Abraham, and Luke has Jesus' lineage going back to Adam. But John announces that even this does not go back far enough or deep enough to account for who Jesus is. Jesus is the Word of God, that is, with God in the beginning, identifiable as God. The Word of God is the self-expression of the Father, the Father's will spoken out, then fleshed out. Therefore the Word of God, Jesus, is the expression and revelation of who the Father is, of who Yahweh is. (Jesus is not the Father, they are distinct, but Jesus does show the world what the Father is like, he displays the Father's glory.) Everything was made through Jesus and for him. The Word of God, Jesus, is divine. But then we learn that the Word was made flesh, the Word incarnated, the Word of God became a baby, born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph. Jesus did not just come into the world. All the world belongs to the Lord, but there was a special people who had been set aside for himself, the nation of Israel. And it was to this people that he specifically came in the flesh. And his own people did not receive him, because being religious is not the same as being able to see the light of God. Being religious today is still no guarantee that you have seen the light of God.

All throughout the book of John a distinction is made between those who can see and those who are blind, those who are in the light and those who are in the darkness. This is not talking about philosophical enlightenment, but rather about those who are able to see and accept who Jesus is and receive his light, and those who are unwilling and unable to receive his light. Jesus is the only source of light.

Light shines in and overcomes darkness. Light illuminates things that are kept in the darkness, sin that people want to keep hidden.

The idea of God dwelling on earth in some way was not totally new to Israel, as the glory of the Lord was in the tabernacle and the Temple (though it departed as narrated by Ezekiel),

and in Zechariah there is a promise that the Lord's presence would be with them again. Still, the idea that the glory of God would become present in the world in the flesh of a baby was a shocking one to Israel. This kind of glory is one of obedience, vulnerability, sacrifice, and the glory comes not from the world but from the Father, the only glory that matters. This incarnation of the Word of God shows the world who the Father is, what the Father is like (this is another huge theme in the book of John).