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The King Who Brought Christmas

THE KINGS OF CHRISTMAS

The Word became flesh and
lived for a while among us.

– JOHN 1:14

He came to that which was his
own, but his own did not
receive him. Yet to all who
received him, to those who
believed in his name, he gave
the right to become children of
God—children born not of
natural descent, nor of human
decision or a husband's will,
but born of God.

– JOHN 1:11-13

Exactly who *is* lying in the manger? One of the wonderful things about the Christmas season is that it is the one time of the year that millions of people will think about Jesus, when they don't usually do so. Secular radio stations even play "our" music! Although a lot of good can come from this, there's always the subtle danger of embracing the season without delving deeply into the mystery behind it. For example, many people will drive past nativity scenes and see a little manger. And it will have little meaning because they will keep the One in the manger, little as well. The gospel of John, however, doesn't start with a manger. Instead, John starts with some powerful affirmations about "the King who brought Christmas."

WELCOME

Why is it that the *baby* Jesus seems to get more attention than the *adult* Jesus ever gets? [Could it be that the baby Jesus is somehow less threatening? Could this be one of the reasons John begins his gospel as he does—Jesus had a birth date, but He did not have a starting point. If we can "reduce" Jesus, it becomes much easier to remove him from the center of our lives.]

WORD

Read John 1:1-18

1. Why do you think John calls Jesus "the Word?" (notice vs 1, 14). What do you find most significant about this affirmation? [By using the title "the Word" for Jesus, John was declaring that Jesus is the full expression of God to us. Just as we express our thoughts to others through words, God expressed himself to humanity in Jesus. Notice John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-2.]
2. What other words or phrases are used in this passage to describe Jesus? What strikes you most about Jesus in this passage? Why?
3. What point is John trying to make in verses 6-9? How does this point reinforce his assertion in verses 10-13, that Jesus is *the* issue of all history? [Jesus is the focus of all prophecy (vs 6-9). John was the greatest of the prophets. John the Baptist was not the light, but gave witness to the light. He, like some other prophets, had the privilege of giving witness to the coming of God's Son! But notice the privilege we share as recipients of their witness, 1 Peter 1:10-12.]
4. Nobody has ever divided men like Jesus Christ. John contrasts Jesus' rejection by the majority with his reception by a few (vs 10-13). What accounts for these radically different responses?
5. What does it mean to "receive" Jesus? What is the result (vs 13)?

WORSHIP

Use your discussion as a springboard to praise Jesus for what John says about Him (notice what John writes later in life, Rev. 1:12-16; 19:11-16). Ask group members to share a song that comes to mind, based on your discussion, and then sing it (after they've explained the connection). Close with the first verse of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (997) adding additional lines: "*We'll praise His name forever...*," "*We'll give Him all the glory...*," "*For He alone is worthy...*"

WORKS

Jesus' rightful place is not a manger, but a throne. Isaac Watts penned the words, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room...." Have you? In what area of your life do you need to reaffirm and submit to His Lordship?