

Study Series: The God Who Is There

Author: D. A. Carson

Lesson Title: “The God Who Becomes a Human Being”   
(pp. 92-105)

Session 7

October 15, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: Jesus’s coming fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

Focus on this goal: To help adults study Jesus as the continuation and fulfillment of the Old Testament

Key Bible Passage: John 1:1-18

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask the group to consider what “Pinocchio,” “Velveteen Rabbit,” and “Beauty and the Beast” all have in common. State these children’s stories have the same theme of something becoming real because of love.

Analyze how the Bible is similar to, yet vastly different from these stories. State: The Bible is not a fairy tale, but a true account of God working His plan of restoration and redemption. It relates to us the amazing news that the God who is there became a human being because of His great love for His creation.

Step 2. Prophecy

Hold in your hand the pages of Isaiah through Malachi in your Bible. Explain these seventeen books are known as the Major and Minor Prophets. Many of these prophetic books can be inserted chronologically into the historical narratives of 1–2 Kings as God’s spokesmen gave His warnings and promises to the Israelites.

Ask if adults agree or disagree with the first sentence of Day One (p. 92) and why. Read the Day One Note (p. 92). Ask: Is that good news? Bad news? Confusing news? Explain your reasoning.

Use remarks from Day One (pp. 92-93) to guide the group to explore how Old Testament strands come together in Jesus.

Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 94).

Step 3. John 1:1-18, Part 1

Note the author asks at the end of Day One (p. 94), “What shall we make of this Jesus?” He answers that question by guiding us through John 1:1-18 to help us begin to “sense the wonder and power of who this Jesus is and why He has come” (p. 95)

Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 94-95). Invite volunteers to share words or phrases that stood out to them from this passage and why.

Request two volunteers read Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. Ask: How can we see Old Testament strands coming together by comparing these two verses? Guide the group to use just John 1:1 to complete the statement, “Jesus is . . . .” Consider various ways people respond to those truths.

State our goal should be to progress spiritually until we can respond as Thomas did. Read John 20:28-29.

Step 4. John 1:1-18, Part 2

Ask what we can know about this Word from John 1:3. Invite a volunteer to read Colossians 1:15-17. Ask: How can recognizing Jesus as God’s agent in creation give us great confidence?

Request adults state additional confidence they gain from the truths of John 1:4-5 and why. (The cross-references in Day Three, activity 1 [p.97] and the Note [p. 98] can help with this discussion.)

Request a volunteer read John 1:6-11. Evaluate what we can learn from John the Baptist and Jesus’s people, the Jews, about positive and negative ways to respond to Jesus. Consider reasons people reject Jesus.

Ask what occurs in people who believe in and receive Jesus. Urge adults to privately consider Day Three, activity 2 (p. 98) and to talk with you after the session if they want to know more about receiving Jesus and being born again into a new creation.

Step 5. John 1:1-18, Part 3

Request someone read the first four words of John 1:14. Ask: Why should that short phrase leave us absolutely stunned? Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 99).

Ask: What comes to mind when I say, “There’s no place like home”? What about “Let it go”? State that for many people just those short phrases can cause people to recall the movies The Wizard of Oz or Frozen. Explain John’s few lines in 1:14-18 likely would have caused his original Jewish readers to recall Exodus 32–34. Briefly summarize the events of those Old Testament chapters.

Invite responses to Day Four, activity 2 (p. 100).

Step 6. John 1:1-18, Part 4

Note the author explores five themes from Exodus that are picked up in John 1:14-18, once again showing how all the Old Testament strands come together in Jesus. Read the first full sentence of John 1:14. Relate the literal translation of “made his dwelling” (p. 100). Explore why it is so significant that Jesus tabernacled among us.

Encourage adults to recall Moses’s request and God’s response in Exodus 33:18-20. Ask: Why does that make the second phrase in John 1:14 even more astounding? Discuss the Day Five Note (p. 101). Analyze how Jesus embodied both grace and truth.

Request a volunteer read John 1:16-18. Explore how the grace Jesus gives replaces the grace God had already given Moses.

Invite someone to read the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 102). Invite responses to Day Five, activity 2 (p. 102).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite adults to share truths from this study that have emphasized to them how Jesus is the continuation and fulfillment of the Old Testament. Ask: What are ways we can respond faithfully to those truths?

Close in prayer.

