



INTRODUCTION

Children count the weeks, days and hours in anxious anticipation of Christmas. If the truth be told, it's not just children. The anticipation stays with most of us throughout life.

Imagine waiting for the first Christmas—a wait that started before the world began.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1 (NIV)

Before creation, Jesus was with God and He was God. He was a part of everything created—the stars, the mountains, the oceans and you. That's worth your consideration as you anxiously anticipate Christmas.

DISCUSSION STARTER

1. What is something very valuable to you that you had to wait a long time to receive (Ex: package by mail, letter from loved one, college acceptance letter, etc.)?
2. What is the biggest sacrifice someone has ever made for you (Parent working two jobs so you could have _____, etc.)?

EVALUATE IT

1. Why did the Word become flesh and live among us? Was this a backup plan or was it THE plan? Explain.
2. Why do you think John begins his Gospel with the same phrase as Genesis 1:1 rather than with the birth of Jesus?
3. Read John 1:1-5. What is the relationship between the Word and God? Substitute the name Jesus for “the Word” in John 1:1. How does that make you think differently about this verse?
4. Read Genesis 1:27. Why is it important that Jesus came “in the flesh”? How does it affect what you think about God knowing He came as a human being?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What does John's emphasis on the preexistent, creator Christ mean to you?
2. Jesus left the comforts of heaven to come to the place He created for our benefit. How should we follow His example? What does that look like for us?

ILLUSTRATION

One raw winter night a man heard an irregular thumping sound against the kitchen storm door. He went to a window and watched as tiny, shivering sparrows, attracted to the evident warmth inside, beat in vain against the glass.

Touched, the farmer bundled up and trudged through fresh snow to open the barn for the struggling birds. He turned on the lights, tossed some hay in a corner, and sprinkled a trail of saltine crackers to direct them to the barn. But the sparrows, which had scattered in all directions when he emerged from the house, still hid in the darkness, afraid of him.

He tried various tactics: circling behind the birds to drive them toward the barn, tossing cracker crumbs in the air toward them, retreating to his house to see if they'd flutter into the barn on their own. Nothing worked. He, a huge alien creature, had terrified them; the birds could not understand that he actually desired to help.

He withdrew to his house and watched the doomed sparrows through a window. As he stared, a thought hit him like lightning from a clear blue sky: If only I could become a bird—one of them—just for a moment. Then I wouldn't frighten them so. I could show them the way to warmth and safety. At the same moment, another thought dawned on him. He had grasped the whole principle of the Incarnation.

A man's becoming a bird is nothing compared to God's becoming a man. The concept of a sovereign being as big as the universe He created, confining Himself to a human body was—and is—too much for some people to believe.

-Paul Harvey



Interested in joining or starting a Life Group?
Contact our Life Groups Minister.

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