

INTRODUCTION TO THE JOHN PROLOGUE

JOHN 1:1-18

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John 1:1-18, often referred to as the Prologue of John's Gospel, is a summary of everything recorded in the Gospel of John. Some Bible scholars believe that John first wrote the gospel and then, after he was done, came back and wrote the introduction that we call the prologue. In any case, the whole truth concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God is found in these first eighteen verses.

The prologue contains both declarative statements and explanations of the of the things being declared. There are three declarations of truth about Jesus, found in verses 1, 14, and 18. Then in close proximity to each one of these three magnificent declarations, there are three explanations that help illuminate the truth about Jesus that is declared in verses 1, 14, and 18.

When we look at the three declarations together, we discover that the first two declarations are made up of three statements each and the last declaration is made up of two statements. The three statements found in verse 1 are clearly identified. In verse 14 there are also three statements; however, they are not as clearly identified. For that reason, wherever the subject is missing, but understood, I have placed it in parentheses.

"In the beginning was the Word;"
"And the Word was with God;"
"And the Word was God."

"The Word became flesh;"
"And (the Word) made His dwelling among us;"
"(And the Word was) full of grace and truth."

By looking at the first two declarations like this, you can see the beauty of their relationship one to the other. Listen as I read the first lines of each declaration together, followed by the second lines, and then the third.

"In the beginning was the Word."
"And the Word became flesh."
"And the Word was with God;"
"And the Word made His dwelling among us."
"And the Word was God:"
"Full of grace and beauty."

The third declaration, found in verse 18, is made up of just two statements. I have made the first statement red in color because it naturally belongs to the first declaration. The second statement I have made blue, because it naturally belongs to the second declaration.

"No one has ever seen God;" (belongs to declaration #1)
"But God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (belongs to declaration #2)

Taken together, these three declarations speak, first of all of the grandeur and greatness of our glorious God. Second, they declare that this great and glorious God came down to this tiny earth and into human flesh. These are the tremendous truths that should be on our minds around Christmas.

Look again at the first declaration that declares the greatness of God. The main subject spoken about here is the Word. Some of you already know that the word used here in the original language is the Greek word that is pronounced "Logos."

That word is deep in meaning. The English text translates "Logos" as "Word." Words, of course, are the

expressions of thoughts or ideas. The words we speak are verbal expressions of our thoughts. But that is really only one part of the meaning of the Greek word “Logos.”

At this point, those of you who can read Chinese will be at an advantage. The Chinese Bible translates the Greek word “Logos” into the Chinese word “Dau”. Translated into English, the Chinese word “Dau” would refer more to the thought behind the expression rather than the expression of the thought.

I believe that both the Chinese and the English translations are correct in that they both give us a partial understanding of what the Greek word “Logos” means. Put the two translations together, and the word “Logos” can be understood more completely. In the beginning there was thought that could express itself, and this thought that could express itself was connected to the Personality of God. In the Greek language, the tense of the verb used here is not past or present or future. It is continuous. It describes a continuous existence that cannot be measured in time. So, in the beginning there continuously existed thought that could express itself that continuously was connected to a Supreme Personality. That is not what my English Bible says, but that is what the original language conveys.

This declaration lifts us to a level of grandeur that is beyond our own experience. Here we are talking about timelessness and an infinite capacity for understanding and infinite knowledge and an infinite ability to express thoughts. Here we are talking about God who is infinite in every way.

And then, we come to the second declaration and discover that this infinite God entered into a finite world. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This is what we call incarnation, and it is something that we can never comprehend completely.

Sometimes, people will use the word Incarnation to describe what a person goes through when he becomes a missionary to a people of a completely different culture and language. However that analogy doesn't even come close to describing what took place when the Word became flesh.

We can only wonder how an omnipotent God can become a baby who depends entirely on his parents for survival. It boggles the mind to think about God who is completely unrestricted by time and space becoming a part of a world tied down by such restrictions. God, who has absolute authority over all things subjecting Himself to the authority of earthly parents, is a thought that is impossible to comprehend. And yet, all this really happened.

With this awesome thought in mind, let's continue to worship our God.