

While in Genesis it refers to the creation but in John's Gospel it speaks of eternity. There is no indication that the word is a part of God's created order. In fact, it says his eternity in the beginning, his fellowship with God, the word was with God. And his divine nature, the word was God.

As Williams translates it and says, the word was face to face with God. That is, the word was God himself.

The word refers to God rather than to his creation. And by grounding his Gospel in the word, John sets forth the terms of eternity. In Matthew's Gospel he speaks of Jesus as the son of Abraham. Mark speaks of the Gospel as the son of God. In Luke the story is just simply the word concerning Jesus. But in John, the Gospel is founded in eternity, and here is really the beginning of it all.

The role of the word is not a passive but an active one. And all things were made through him. In Verse 10

John declares that the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. And John sets forth the faith that the claim God rightly had upon us, through creation.

Now it is John's (Christmas) Gospel we see as it were, the Christ child holding the world like a ball in his hands.

So Walters declares in his book.

"A SIGNIFICANT PROLOGUE"

John I

INTRODUCTION:

You cannot judge the importance of a document by the number of words which it contains. This is well illustrated in the following example. The Lord's Prayer contained 56 words. There are 266 words in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; 297 words in the Ten Commandments; The American Declaration of Independence, considered to be by many the greatest political document ever written, contains only 300 words. But the United States Government order regulating the price of cabbage involves 29,911 words.

Alexander Pope said that words are like leaves. And where they most abound, much fruit since the need is rarely found.

As Solomon said a word fitly spoken is like apples of Gold in pictures of Silver. Proverbs 25:11. These words of the wise man certainly would apply to documents of today. And yet, somehow, in our generation we feel that the more bulky a document is composed of, the greater

impact it will make, or the better it will operate.

The same thing is true when we come to the Gospel of John, the 1st Chapter, and discover here that in very few words, John tells us a great story about the beginning of the word. In fact, this takes us back to the book of Genesis when we read the same words in the beginning speaking about the creation of this world.

There is no passage in all the New Testament that compels more interest than this passage in this Gospel. Exactly what is it? And what is the prologue?

Well, in the first place it is a striking effort to gain the attention of both (Jew and Greek). The very first verse contains the term "word" or logos which meant God's self-expression to a Jew and impersonal rational reality to a Greek.

The readers would be inclined to bring their own understanding to the word. Now John seeks to lead them to understand that God is here and active.

In the second place the author is trying to give us something that is religious. He is not just telling us an abstract idea but he is relating the story of God's concern for the redemption of the world. And he dwells upon this in reference even to the creation and

redemption. That the incarnation of the word means this to history. And it is the major theme at the end of his Gospel, Chapter 20, Verse 31, he sums up this meaning.

Third, the prologue set forth, the major emphasis which is the (interpretation of Jesus) which begins in Verse 19 and continues to the very end of the book. Words like "life", "light", "darkness", "witness", "believes", "world", "knowledge", "flesh", "grace", "truth", "glory" have a specific meaning and important place in the Gospel as a whole. The meaning found in the word "logos" is unfolded in the whole Gospel.

Fourth, John in the prologue is (introducing what he understands of Jesus.) It is John who talks about Jesus in eternity with God.

Fifth, it is (like a confession of faith) set to music somebody has said, it is sometimes suggested that Verses 1, 3, 9, 14, 16, constitute the hymns to which Verses 6, 8, 13, and 15, 17, and 18 have been added. Where this hymn originated we do not rightly know.

Now the word translated (logos) tells us something about the nature and the function in Verses 1-5. These opening verses, as I have mentioned, it is similar to Genesis 1:1.

gave power to become the sons or the children of God. Not all of his people rejected him. Not all of the Jews turned their back upon him. From the circle of John the Baptist and from everywhere came those who did accept him. To receive him is to believe in him. To accept him as one sent from God as Messiah, as son of God.

Now the power to become that is given to the disciple is actually the right to become. It is the privilege to become.

The Greek word used for power here suggests this. That John emphasizes that the goal of the religious man is not reached by natural striving, nor by his own help, but it is by his willingness to put himself in a position to receive it. Sonship is not the result of man's action but God's.

Again and again the fourth gospel repeats that there are two kinds of life, two possibilities. Life from below - life from above. Life of the flesh, life of the spirit. Life that is lived in the natural, and a life that is lived through being a child of God. That which is to be an earthly son or a divine son. There is only one way to God through the new birth. And it is given through the logos. In Verse 13: To believe in his name

Now this verse teaches that the creative universe unlike the logos is not eternal, and that the logos is the source of all that exists, whenever and wherever it may be.

John teaches us not to despise the world God has made for he has created it through him. We know as the word of God and yearns to redeem it, through the incarnation of the same word.

In him was life, and life was the light of men. Now the logos was related not only to God and the world but to men. Life in John's mind means to the existence that is characteristic of God himself. It is God's life, life and light are beautifully joined together. For with thee is the fountain of life in thy light do we see light.

Psalms 36:9. Now these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. Chapter 20, Verse 31.

Jesus is not only life but light which means illumination. Light is that by which men are able to recognize the operation of God in the world. The light shineth in darkness, the darkness has not overcome it.

And this talks of the permanent work of the logos. His light does not wax and wane but shines constantly. And

light does not avoid darkness but it over comes it. It shines through it. And that's the mission of Jesus to triumph in the world of darkness. The appearance of the light has not yet illuminated the darkness but there certainly is to be a final victory. 16:33.

Witness to the logos and God sent a man here whose name was John, the appearance of the logos. John the Baptist sent from God like the ancient prophets. The mission is to set the stage. The Baptist does not appear to be just an accident but it is the providence of God. His task is to call men to the full revelation of the logos. He is not the light but bears witness to that light. And we know that all of the gospel is set forth the contrast between Jesus and John that the Baptist was the most striking and commanding figure so Josephus points out. John was sent to bear witness. One of the key words of the Gospel is witness, which is employed to set forth the distinctiveness of Jesus. The purpose of John's testimony was to bring all men to believe in Jesus. And the Gospel here has been written, that believing you may have life in his name. Now the logos in the world was to lighten up the world, to enlighten man, and it was extended to every man in the world. His revelation is as wide as every human heart. The true light is not a shadow

or a reflection but the reality of eternal light. And the enlightenment a person is to make clear the divine purpose of life and claim this. The logos teaches a man his true condition before God and call him to a life of obedience. The world is the object of God's love and he has sent his son to save this world.

Now the world knew him not. To know him is to possess salvation through trust and committment. One who gives the knowledge of God in Verse 18.

Gnostics of John's time taught that salvation lay in the possession of knowledge that removed the ignorance of men.

John taught that salvation lay in the possession of knowledge that removes the sin of man.

They offered man information but Christianity offered man forgiveness.

It says that he came to his own, and his own received him not. He found no room in most of the hearts of his own people. We could document this by Mark 6:1-6 and Mark 12:1-12. There were people who belonged to God such as Deuteronomy 7:6, Exodus 19:5.

But all who received him, who believed in his name, he

indeed, John the Baptist came for a witness. The matter of his testimony, he was to bear light. He was to carry this light. John was like the night watchman going around the town proclaiming the approach of morning. He was a watchman, he was sent of God out into the world. And his design was that all men through him might believe. He taught men to look through him to Christ.

He prepared men for the reception of the entertainment of Christ and the gospel, by awakening in them the sense of sin.

If they would but believe this witness, then they would see Christ and accept him.

V. 8 Verse 8, we have a caution here that he was only to bear the witness, he was not the light. He was not the star. And today ministers of the Gospel, they are not Christ, they are only the Lord's witness. They are his to testify.

V. 9 Verse 9, Christ was the true light, not that John was a false light, but he was a very small light. And Christ enlightens every man that comes into the world, by his power of reason, by man's power of reason, by the grace he gives,

V. 10 Verse 10, Christ was in the world. He undertook to

is to rely upon him. And here is the divine means of the new birth. That those who were chosen to accept this, they become sons of God through him and not through self.

The flesh represents man in his earthly limitation and it suggests that man by his physical nature certainly can never reach this. But John does not point to the limitation which the logos places upon him. For John says he (dwelt) among us, he pitched his tent. God dwelt in the midst of his people in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Exodus 25:8, Exodus 40:34. The logos dwells as the very presence of God among those who receive him. And here is a manifestation of the fullness of his grace and truth. Exodus 34:6. This is trustworthy, this is a reality, the word truth is used more than 30 times in this Gospel.

We have beheld his glory is the testimony of the faithful followers who were witnesses and eye witnesses of the Christ, as the glory of the son from the Father. He is the only son and in Verse 17 we find for the first time he mentions Jesus Christ.

V. 15 Now in Verse 18, the Greek word which is used for (cried) means that here in a sense is a (continuing witness).

John the Baptist continues to witness to Christ. For the law was given through Moses and grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The remarkable thing about this word is that it suggests that grace and truth did not come with the law. That is why this prologue is most significant. With these remarks, let us come and briefly look at this wonderful prologue and chapter.

In Verse 1 we read of whom he speaks the word. The Jews were taught that the word of God was the same with God. And it plainly tells us why he calls Christ the word. He is the only Begotten Son. There is the word uttered and the word that is spoken. What he says of him is enough to prove beyond contradiction that he is God. His existence in the beginning was the word. This speaks of His existence, not only in the incarnation but before all time. The word was from the beginning. But the word was before the world. Eternity is usually expressed by being before the foundation of the world. And the word was in co-existence with the father. Let none say that when we are inviting them to Christ that we draw them away from God. The word was with God and ever with God. And the word was with him. And in this respect, Christ is the substance of God. And in this respect, he is the

glory of God. He is the counsel, the divine, the great mystery.

V. 3 In Verse 3, he is the ancient of all things and there is no denying that he made all things. God the Father did nothing without him, in the work. This proves that he is God.

V. 4 Verse 4, the origin of his life, life was in him. And all living creatures have their life from him.

5 Fifth, in him is light, and light shineth in the darkness.

V. 6 Verse 6, he gives us some account of the witness he is about to produce. In general that he was a man sent from God, God is pleased to speak to us by men like ourselves. John was a great man, but he was a man. He was a son of man. He was sent from God. He was God's messenger. God gave him both his mission, and God gave him his message.

V. 7 Verse 7, we are told that he came for a witness, that was his business. He was a leading witness, he was here for a testimony. Like the tabernacle of the testimony, the ark of the testimony, the law of the testimony, but now divine revelation is to be turned into another channel. And the testimony of Christ is the testimony of God. And

indeed, John the Baptist came for a witness. The matter of his testimony, he was to bear light. He was to carry this light. John was like the night watchman going around the town proclaiming the approach of morning. He was a watchman, he was sent of God out into the world. And his design was that all men through him might believe. He taught men to look through him to Christ.

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whole evolution. And his book was a great success. And it received great enthusiasm by the German materialists - that Darwin became so intoxicated with his success and he prepared the second edition, and he cut God out of the second edition.

Now this same thing happens to people today. They cut God out of their lives, they just cut him off, some people cut him out of Christmas - they don't have any thing to do with Christ. They wouldn't have anything to do with his birth and we need today to come face to face with this and how marvelous we read here in Verse 15

V/15 that John the Baptist, in his testimony of Jesus Christ, he said that he came for a witness. Now here he tells us that he did accordingly bear witness. How he expressed his testimony. It says he cried. Now in the Old Testaments the prophets cried aloud to show the people their sins. And here is John crying aloud to show people their saviour.

It was a public testimony proclaimed in a manner that people might take notice of it. He cried to assure them of the truth, he appealed to them through his ministry. That here was one who was going to come, that he was going to prepare the way for it. And he was to

reconcile the world back to God. And the world was made by him.

V/11 Verse 11, he came unto his own. The people of Israel his own people. And yet those who were supposed to remember the covenant and Christ was not ashamed to come unto his own. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But many of them rejected him, they would not receive him. His own people should have bid him welcome - they should have considered how great the obligations were that had been layed upon them, and of the opportunities of the law. He came among them, he introduced himself by signs and wonders. They did not receive his doctrine, they did not welcome him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against him. In fact, some of the chief priests and leaders held him in contempt.

V/12 In Verse 12, yet there was a remanent that was faithful to him and that received him. Now this is the true Christian description, that is a person who receives Christ. To be a Christian indeed is to believe on Christ's name. It is to give you consent to him. Now to believe on his name is to acknowledge he is what these great names speak of him to be. Believing in Christ's name is to receive him as a gift from God. We receive his

doctrines as true and good. We receive his law as just and holy. We receive all that he offers to us through his grace. His becomes a privilege of adoption, then we become sons of his. It is a great privilege for a Christian to become a child of God. By nature, we are children of wrath. But God calls us and we have the great privilege of coming into his will.

V.13 Verse 13, we have the privilege of regeneration. For that which is born here as a child is born again. It is to propagate the generations from one to another. And here we have the privilege of regeneration.

V.14 Verse 14, the word was made flesh. This expresses Christ's incarnation more clearly than what went before. The human nature of Christ was veiled and the word was made flesh. It intimates the reality that he was truly man and he subjected himself and dwelt among us in this world. Students of history always are interested in tracing the beginning, the source, of all the revolutions and discoveries. And John's statement here teaches us a fact in the simplicity of the statement as understood in the prologue and declares that here is something that he was the word, he was with God, he was God. And this very phrase defies us beyond comprehension. In the beginning we must reverently come to understand that here

is the origin. Here is a place we can track back to the word, to the beginning of the opportunity for us to really know God. And this gives us an expression of his deity, that he was God, that he was divine, and that he was all that John said he was. Sometimes we talk to children about how easy a thing is and we'll say to them that it is just as easy as ABC - now it may be a hard thing we have to learn but it is something that we need to learn. That here is the ABC, here is the alpha and omega, here is the first and the last. And there is some sense in which in God there is no first and no last. But here is a simple lesson that we need to get, that the word was with God, the tabernacle among us. He pitched his tent right with us. He came down here to live with us, right beside us. He tabernacled with us and as religious people today we feel his presence with us, we know his promise says, lo I am with you, and this means everything to us. That we are conscious that the Christ, the divine Christ, is ever with us. That even though we cannot touch him, that the word of God is with us, through his grace.

But how tragic it is as Paul Tournier, in his book "The Whole Person In a Broken World", tells us that Darwin was a believer, that is in his first edition of the origin of species - that he spoke of God as the director of his

Messiah and he speaks of him humbly and they rejoice as they go on their way. And he brought him to Jesus. Here is an instance of true love, this brother for the other brother. And they came to Jesus and Jesus called him by name in Verse 42.

Then we have the finishing note of this 1st chapter 45 where Phillip was called immediately by Christ himself, not by Andrew, God has various methods of bringing people to himself. And Phillip came and was brought to Christ by this power of follow me. Now Nathanael was invited to Jesus by Phillip in Verse 45. And he came a little bit (skeptical) but he was invited to come. And Jesus said, behold an Israelite indeed. Now here was a man of Israel who was a sincere follower and good example of Israel, whose character was not in vain. He was a genuine son of honest Jacob. Not only by his seed but by his spirit. Here was a sincere professor of the faith of Israel. He was true to that religion, he had lived up to it. He had practiced it. Jesus said there is no guile in this man, that is, according to the Israelites, but he said here is a man without tricks or design. Here is a man that will put his faith, and we find that he accepts full assurance in

give Jesus preference. He that comes after me, he said, is going to be the Christ. And he is to be preferred above all others and he is going to be first. And he is going to be respected. And as he preaches about him, John says he is not worthy even to untie his shoes.

19 In Verse 19, he speaks again of Christ, that he was full of grace and of truth. And he repeats this about the blessings received.

17 In Verse 17, he says we have received grace and truth. Here is a reference that is above the law of Moses. The law was given to Moses, here was a glorious discovery that it was good for man, but now here is another connected with the truth, and the performance, and the substance of the Old Testament promises, the shadows, the types, are now here being fulfilled.

178 Verse 18, another thing we receive from Christ is a revelation of God to us. He has declared God to us and this is a wonderful discovery and revelation that the Old Testament was not able to give us. But now here in incarnation we have made the discovery that here is the only Begotten Son who has been revealed unto us.

19 Verse 19, we have here the testimony of John that they were sent to see John. They came to him to question him, there Aaron was not to find out about Jesus, but it

was to come out of curiosity, it was to show their authority. And they came in and asked him two or three questions about who he was.

20 Verse 20, John said I'm not the Christ.

21 Verse 21 He said I'm not Elijah. He disowns himself to be a prophet. He was not of Moses, he was not a prophet. He was not one like Samuel. He was not one of the old prophets that had come forth from the dead. Though John was a prophet, revealing Jesus Christ.

22 Verse 22, The committee was sent to examine him.

Now they said, tell us who you are. And of course John says, what do you say. He says, I am just a voice here crying in the wilderness. I am just here sounding an alarm. I am a human voice crying earnestly loud that people might know of the Christ. I am trying to correct a mistake. I am trying to get people on the right track.

26 In Verse 26, the account he gave of it, he directed them to one that was greater than himself. And also in

27 Verse 27. Now it was a great distance from Jerusalem beyond the Jordan, but he was there preaching and teaching.

29 In Verse 29, here is the testimony of Christ, the first day they saw him coming from the wilderness.

He said, here is a lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world. Here is a sacrifice, he takes away sin.

He takes away guilt. John tells about the spirit descending upon him in Verse 30 and 31.

And then in Verse 35, 36, he tells about how he looked upon Jesus.

37 Now I believe in Verse 37 we have a description of two disciples of John, Andrew and another, and they were directed to Christ. Their readiness to go over to Christ, they heard John speak of the Lamb of God. And in Verse 38, they notice Christ and they came up to him. And they gave them a gracious invitation to come and see. And they accepted his invitation.

Then Andrew went out to seek his brother, Peter. Now there are some today who complain that Peter might have been one of the first disciples, one of the first leaders of the church. But I want you to notice here carefully that Peter was not the first disciple of our Lord. Indeed he was brought by Andrew who had the honor first to be acquainted with Christ. And Andrew was the instrument of bringing Peter to Christ as recorded here in this chapter.

In information which Andrew gave to Peter was that which brought him to Jesus. He found him, he went after his brother, he told him that he had discovered the

community who is like a blind man walking about ready to die, and he can say, nobody cared for my soul. I remember reading a story and Dr. George Truitt told about a heart moving conversion in the mid-winter time of a little Sunday School boy, who was accidentally shot by a neighbor friend. Skillful doctors worked upon him, they said he will not live. And he did recover consciousness for two or three days, and the great preacher went to visit him, and there was a grief stricken father who paced up and down the floor, while his little boy suffered. And he said, he cannot die. He was only 8 or 9, years of age. And his father was a man who was seldom sober. Why he said, my little man will be better, he will get well soon. And the little face looked up to him and whispered "No, Papa, I will not get well." And when his Daddy protested he said, "You will get well, and I will be a good man, and I will change my ways." But the little fellow's face clouded up and he said, "When I'm gone Papa, I want you to remember that I loved you even if you did get drunk." And that sentence broke the father's heart. He left the room unable to tarry any longer. A few minutes later, he was found lying upon his face out upon the ground behind the little cottage, sobing with a broken heart. The preacher knelt beside him and sought to comfort him and he

Jesus Christ with a confession of his mouth and by belief in his heart in Verse 49.

Now if I may summarize this chapter. The greatest and the highest achievement here that we can think about is as Mr. Beecher once said, what do you count the greatest thing that a human can do for another. And without hesitation he said the greatest thing is not that one shall be a scientist, important as it is, nor that one shall be a statesmen, as important as that is, nor that one shall even be a theologian, as important as that is. But the greatest thing in all he said, is for one human being to bring another to Christ Jesus as Saviour.

This is the supreme ambition of this chapter. It should be the supreme ambition of every church, of every individual Christian that somebody should come to this Christ. The supreme method for bringing people to Christ is indicated here in this chapter. Especially as Andrew brought his brother to Jesus Christ. It was a personal method, it was Christ's plan. For Jesus said, ye shall be witnesses unto me. The text tells of a man who won somebody to Christ. And it was the case of an ordinary man, the man Andrew. He was not an outstanding preacher like Paul. And the Bible makes only two or three references to him but here he stands. He had just found the Saviour.

How would he act? Well, two things stand out in response to that question. First of all, Andrew is immediately interested that somebody else may be saved. Don't you like that. Isn't that a wonderful example for us. Immediately, this man Andrew is concerned with somebody else, and their being saved.

He went straight home to get his first work in for his Saviour. And you like that, I'm sure. He went after a difficult case. He went after his own brother Simon, who was impulsive. Andrew was a weakling compared to Simon - his big strong brother. And I wonder if sometimes our plea of religion ought to carry us as this man where ever and whenever the spirit might lead us. We never know, it may be a father's prayer sometime that will start a person on the way. Everything in this world worthwhile costs, and you and I must bear to go forth to this chief task of winning people to Christ. Andrew went about personal work, and he sought people for Christ. Life must make an impact upon life. A dead man cannot talk about life. A man who has never had any experience with Christ cannot truly present Christ. And the businessman knows the power of personal work, he knows what it takes as salesmen are sent out to face the customers, face to face. Politicians understand the power of personal work. They argue and

plead to win votes. There can be no substitute for personal work, none at all. Now we know that Jesus preached his chief sermon on the new birth to just one man. And if Jesus thought it worthwhile just for one person, then how much more for us to serve him and to do our best to go out and win others.

How may you and I win people to Christ as did Andrew of old. First, we must magnify the word of God, and the offer of the divine spirit will help us to magnify the word. We must preach the word.

We must seek the guidance and the power of the divine spirit, each step of the way. The power of personal testimony, I have found the Messiah, let me tell you about him. And when the word burned its way into Simon's heart, then he was ready to go and look for Jesus. And you listen to somebody today who would come forward and say, this day I know that God has been dealing with me. And every ear will listen. There is no power like the power of a personal testimony.

There is no power like the human power of personal love as wrapped up in this wonderful chapter. We let people know that we really care. No man cared for my soul is a great inditement. Is there somebody in this

said, "Sir, after my child loves me like that, oughten I to straighten out and be the right kind of man." The preacher said "I have a story ten thousand times sweeter than that to tell you, God's only son, Begotten Son, loved you well enough to come down from Heaven and die for you himself - the just for you, the unjust, that he might bring you to God. Won't you yield your wasted, sinful, life to him, utterly and honestly, and let him save you in his own divine way."

Then and there he made the great surrender. And the preacher said, you should have heard him later in a prayer meeting giving a powerful testimony as he stands with the tears in his face and tells you how love brought him home, when everything else had failed. They had criticized him because he drank. They scolded him because he drank. They railed at him because he drank. And they used harsh words. But a little boy said, "Papa, I love you even if you do get drunk." And love won the day when everything else had failed. And somehow if we could realize that love never fails us. Do you know that God loves you. Do you know that the master came into this world and became flesh and dwelled among us, that you might have life.

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